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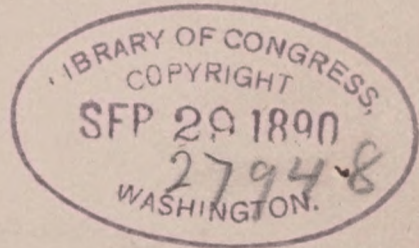
AN EPISODE OF SORRENTO

BY

OWEN INNSLY

AUTHOR OF "LOVE POEMS AND SONNETS"

*"Wem Gott will rechte Gunst erweisen
Den schickt er in die weite Welt"*



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BOSTON

J. G. CUPPLES CO., PUBLISHERS

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To the Lovers of Italy.

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CHAPTER I.

EN ROUTE.

A SHORT time ago, while some repairs or new constructions were in progress along the beginning of the Sorrento road, the blasting of rocks prevented all travel except at certain hours of the day, when the morning and afternoon trains from Naples arrived at Castellammare. At these times operations were suspended and carriages allowed to pass. Persons driving from Naples, or from the more distant towns and villages of the neighboring district, rarely knew of the obstruction of the road, and frequently, on their arrival at the spot of detention shortly after the way had been closed, were obliged to wait several

hours before they could proceed any farther on their journey.

By two o'clock on the afternoon of a day late in April, a considerable number of vehicles was already assembled. They were of all shapes and sizes and their occupants were no less varied than themselves. There were two-horse carriages bearing a faint resemblance to landaus, some of them scrubbed and polished, many broken down in appearance and covered with dust; there were Naples' *carrozzelle*, with their high steps and higher seats, mounted on which one feels like a bird upon a perch; there were donkey carriages, those minutest of all invented conveyances, and often the most dilapidated; there were carts and country wagons; there was one aristocratic ecclesiastical equipage, in which a monsignore, distinguishable by the green cord and tassels upon his broad-brimmed hat, sat in lofty grandeur, while two young priests filled the places opposite him, their backs to the horses; and there were not a few *char-à-bancs*, or *corriccoli*, one of the most characteristic productions of Southern Italy,—large, high,

double-seated vehicles, on or about which as many as fifteen or sixteen persons often sit, lie, or cling at once. Some of these were quite "smart-looking," and were drawn by horses or donkeys, a portion of whose manes was gathered up into a tuft on the top of their heads and tied with a bright ribbon. They also had bells disposed about their harness and long, stiff feathers rising above their ears.

The people in the *corricoli* were dressed in holiday attire; the men and boys had cockades of ribbon and artificial flowers fastened into their hats, and the women, with smoothly braided, shining hair and gay-colored handkerchiefs folded over their shoulders, held in their hands tambourines which they shook as the spirit moved them, or as they happened to detect the gaze of some unaccustomed foreigner fixed upon them with mingled astonishment and admiration. These people had been to some *fiesta* in one of the neighboring towns, and were the prudent ones who had concluded to forego the fascinations of the fireworks in order to reach home before dark.

The other carriages were occupied by peo-

ple of various nationalities and ranks in the social scale. Here a shabby priest or two with book and rosary and the invariably accompanying snuff-box; here an English family,—mamma and papa with several grown-up sons and daughters, the ladies in the neatest travelling costumes, the gentlemen in light-colored suits, and straw hats with white muslin streamers hanging down behind, to protect their necks from the sun.

Filling a sort of open omnibus or excursion wagon, the property of some hotel, and spilling over into an army of donkey carriages, was a party of fifteen American girls, sent by their families to “do Europe” under the charge of a Western clergyman, his wife, and a governess. These girls were very gay and very noisy, and their conduct awakened scorn and derision in the breasts of their English fellow-travellers.

A little farther on were some German artists with soft, slouching hats and distracted beards; from their *vetture* protruded the long poles of sketching umbrellas, the stands of easels, and other tokens of their profession,

while their *vetturini* had stuffed the space between the boot and box of the vehicle with great bundles of hay and straw for the accommodation of the horses, thereby lending to these equipages an air of the most agreeable *sauv' gène*. There were also other Germans and English people, among them several members of that maiden sisterhood which, worthy representatives of the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon races, are to be met with on every famous site and in every romantic corner of Europe. But in Italy do Germans chiefly congregate; for no other foreign people love Italy quite so well as they. This beautiful and chosen country, after Greece the cradle of modern civilization, and the teacher of the nations, is to them almost a second fatherland.

Among the mass of foreigners was also a fair sprinkling of Italians of the upper classes; gentlemen going to look after their *campagnas* and orange groves; *hommes d'affaires* coming to see that the villas of their employers were ready for occupation; for the season was advanced this year, and some proprietors already began to think of residing for a few weeks in their country homes.

Some of the Italians smoked and yawned, some went comfortably to sleep. The priests told their rosaries and took snuff. The monsignore read his breviary, hardly condescending to raise his eyes from its pages. Some people took out their note-books and jotted down their impressions of the scene; while the English ladies produced sketch-books and sketched away with an indefatigability worthy of more satisfactory results. The papas read the guide-books in a loud tone, and in English, to whomever it might concern. The young men and the German artists, smoking of course, left the carriages and lounged about, watching the American girls, to whom the process of eating their lunch, with their laps as a table and their fingers for knives and forks, seemed to afford unlimited amusement. The donkeys and horses munched the short grass and weeds at the side of the road. Italian children went about among the crowd, offering flowers and oranges for sale; and the vetturini conversed with each other, as is their wont, by means of their fingers assisted by various remarkable grimaces and contortions

of the body, or exchanged jokes and abuse pretty equally in the horrible Neapolitan *patois*.

As the afternoon wore on the original group was increased by the arrival of other carriages, among which was one rather large and of respectable appearance, except for the dust which covered it, in which were seated three persons — two ladies, evidently mother and daughter, and a young man. The driver, who possessed a good-natured-looking face, and was more confidence-inspiring than most of the Neapolitan brigands who have selected the profession of vetturini, urging his horses through the outlying ranks of children, beggars, loungers, and foot-passengers, succeeded, by dint of much gesticulation and vociferation, in securing for himself and his party a good position under the shadow of a tree.

“*Va bene?* Will this do?” said he, turning round on the box with a smile which showed all his handsome white teeth.

“*Va benissimo,*” responded the young man with an answering smile. “And now, Mrs. Wyndham, we will set you up directly with some lunch.”

“Yes, for heaven’s sake, get the chicken out,” said the elder lady, “I never was so hungry in my life. Emily, where did you put the salt?”

“Here it is, mamma,” said her daughter in a soothing tone; “and the chicken is all nicely cut. Don’t speak a word until you have had something to eat.”

The elderly lady obeyed the admonition, and her daughter, who for the last ten minutes had been holding the lunch basket in readiness for the instant when they should stop, swiftly spread a napkin over her mother’s knees, and laid upon it the best pieces of chicken, some slices of tongue, and a couple of buttered rolls. Then she and the young man helped themselves, and a few moments of silence ensued, during which the party devoted themselves to the satisfying of the first peremptory cravings of hunger.

“It is not very romantic, but it tastes good,” said Emily at last, holding a morsel of white meat between her fingers. “Have n’t they given us a nice lunch, mamma?”

“It does very well,” returned that lady.

“Harold, where is the wine? *Now* I’m choked. I suppose I shall have to drink it clear,” she continued, as Harold poured her out a tumblerful of the rich-colored red liquid. “I don’t see any water anywhere.”

“O, there is plenty of water in it already, you may be sure,” said Harold, “it would be a pity to mix it any more. They say you never can get pure wine now-a-days. Hold your glass, Emily ; and here is for myself.”

“Well,” began Mrs. Wyndham, when her lunch and the copious draught of wine had in a measure restored her strength, “it may be all very well for young people to go jaunting about on such a day’s excursion, but it’s a great deal too much for an old woman like me. Three mortal hours, if not more, hobbling about on those pavements in Pompeii ; for you can’t do anything but hobble on such cobblestones, and under the broiling sun in the very hottest part of the day !”

“But you wanted to see it, mamma,” said Emily, gently, “and you know you enjoyed it and thought it very interesting.”

“I don’t deny that,” replied her mother ; “I

did like it, especially the loaves of bread — just as they were taken out of the oven and burnt to a cinder — and the poor creatures lying on their faces ; but if I had known what I do now I never would have done it ; and all this driving too ! There is n't a bone in my body that does n't ache. Besides, if you children have got so Europeanized that you can start off on nothing but a cup of coffee and an egg, *I* miss my substantial breakfast ” —

“ You might have had a chop, ma'am, if you had wished,” interposed the young man.

“ Don't talk to me, Harold,” Mrs. Wyndham replied. “ If I have n't lived three years in Paris, like you, I have been long enough in these parts to learn *one* thing, and that is, that what these people are used to doing they do very well, perhaps even better than our folks ; I am willing to admit that they *may*. But require of them any little thing out of the common way and they seem clean daft. You might as well try to get a cup of tea with your luncheon in one of these foreign restaurants as to — to — boil a kettle of hot water on top of the North Pole,” concluded the old lady, pausing in search of a simile sufficiently emphatic.

“But I daresay the people in our country towns would be very much surprised if we should ask for red wine with our supper,” said Emily. “People are pretty much the same all over the world, I fancy.”

“Besides,” added Harold, “here they would only look upon you as slightly demented, while in some of our States you might be visited by a temperance committee. “Is n’t it so, mamma?”

“Well, I suppose it is,” assented Mrs. Wyndham, who always easily recovered her good-humor.

“O!” cried Emily, as another *char-à-banc* drove up filled with a particularly handsome company of peasant men and women; “do look, mamma! I can hardly count them,—thirteen, fourteen — and two boys hanging on underneath. Sixteen people, I declare! Is it not marvellous?”

“They ought to be reported to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,” said Mrs. Wyndham, more inclined to the humanitarian than the picturesque point of view.

“I never saw animals so willing as they are down here,” remarked Harold. “Those horses came in as fresh and brisk as if they had only two or three persons to pull, and ours have not broken their steady trot once to-day. They say the drivers are often very cruel, but we have seen nothing of it. Think of the donkeys we had for Camaldoli! Their masters petted and talked to them as if they had been human beings, and the creatures seemed to understand them perfectly.”

“Yes, I know,” answered Emily; “my boy contrived to make me comprehend that his donkey was his *friend*,—his ‘*buon*’ amico,’ he said.”

“Some of us treat our friends badly enough,” declared Mrs. Wyndham, sententiously.

“O, Harold,” cried Emily, as a trim little carriage and pair drove up near them, “is not that pretty? That must be a private carriage, of course.”

“Just beyond it is as picturesque a fellow as ever I saw. I should like to get out and draw him.”

“Why don’t you?” asked Emily.

“ I don't think there would be time ; people seem to be getting into their carriages again.”

And so they did. In an instant, without any visible signal given or received, every driver was on his box, the reins were gathered up, and they were all whirling down a slight descent that lay before them, over hollows and stones, the carriages rocking and swaying from side to side, avoiding each other's wheels only as if by some miracle ; the vetturini cracking their whips and shouting at the top of their lungs to urge on their horses, as if they had all gone mad together and were running a race to *Bedlam*.

“ Tam O'Shanter was nothing to this,” cried Harold, while Emily burst into an uncontrollable peal of laughter, and her terrified mother clutched her daughter on one side and the seat of the carriage on the other, expecting each moment to be her last.

But after a time the weaker horses and heavier loads were left behind ; the swifter steeds and lighter carriages distanced the intermediate ones ; the wild course calmed into an easy gait, and our party regained their composure and

were able to take notice of the way over which they were proceeding.

At first the road followed the water's edge, but at a considerable height above it. Lined with sweet-scented locust trees, it wound in and out with the deep bays and creeks that indent the coast and sometimes run up for some distance between the hills. On one side sheer precipices fell to where the sea, glowing, beyond the shore, with the deepest sapphire blue, assumed a mysterious dark-green color where it lapped the little beaches or filled the caves that hollow out the rocks; or, for a space, was dyed with light and varied hues where the mineral waters come flowing into it from their sources in the earth. On the left lay the chain of hills out of whose sides the road was cut. Upon the slopes was a paradise of flowers: delicate pink convolvulus, wild sweet peas, and fields of the cactus-like ice-plant covering the gray rocks with a carpet of crimson blossom and hanging down almost to the road. Here a bank was all on fire with scarlet poppies and golden broom. Beyond, in wonderful contrast, twined and clambered white wild-roses and the large, white

convolvulus. Then there came patches of rich, dark-red clover, pink poppies, and blossoms whose names Emily did not know.

Now the road turned somewhat from the sea, the hills retreated from the road, and between them and it vineyards sloped, and again, on the other side, downwards to the sea. Then came the olive groves with their gray, weird foliage, the grass at their feet radiant with flowers. Now they passed one or two villages and found themselves among the orange orchards. At this season of the year the trees were still in bloom, but some of the already ripened or ripening oranges had been allowed to remain upon the branches, and golden fruit hung among the snowy blossoms.

A slight shower of rain began to fall. Mrs. Wyndham took alarm and wanted the carriage closed; but the good-natured driver assured her it would be nothing. In fact, in ten minutes the sun had broken through the clouds again in all its declining glory, tingeing with gold the lustrous foliage of the orange-trees, turning to diamonds the big drops that hung upon the branches, and illuminating the spec-

tral olive trees with a glistening light. The swift rain had brought out all the hidden sweetness in grove and garden ; the air was heavy with the fragrance of the orange blossoms ; every breath brought with it a species of intoxication. No one spoke, for the charm that held them was too perfect for words, but Harold saw tears come into Emily's eyes, and held out his hand to give and receive a sympathetic clasp.

And now they clattered over the paved streets of another village where, as in the former ones they had passed, the children came out to throw roses into the carriage, and beg for *baiocchi*, and where all the men and women were gathered in the doorways, the women with distaffs in their hands, and the men doing nothing at all but bestride their chairs ; for this seems to be the blessed land where the stronger sex may know the sweets of idleness. Only, in the little squares, a few men lay lazily, half asleep, across their unhired donkey carriages, and a few women shuffled along, their wooden shoes resounding noisily on the stones.

Finally the vetturino turned to them, at the same time pointing forwards with his whip,

and crying in a cheery voice "*Ecco Sorrent!*"

But before they reached the centre of the town they turned aside to the right, into a lane confined on either side by a high wall enclosing orange gardens, and so narrow that the wheels almost grated against the walls. Mrs. Wyndham was seized with not altogether unjustifiable apprehensions that they should stick fast. "And what will become of me then?" she demanded anxiously.

"We should have to get you out as they did the old lady in the 'Pictures from Italy,'" said Emily; "only she was in a worse predicament than you would be. She was in a close carriage and they had to pull her out of the window, whereas Harold could easily climb over the back of this carriage and go for a ladder."

But as they proceeded the lane grew no narrower, and it seemed probable that they would pass through it in safety; although then the old lady's mind was disturbed by visions of meeting with another carriage, a dilemma from which she could again imagine no issue.

However, by some fortunate chance, carriages never do seem to meet in these frightfully nar-

row lanes, and the party arrived safely at the quaint entrance of the Hotel Cocumella.

They had written to announce their arrival, but the waiter who spoke French happened to have stepped into the garden. A young girl who had appeared at the door at the sound of carriage wheels, rang a bell violently for the absent waiter, and then ushered the ladies upstairs to await his return. Harold remained behind to pay the driver.

“*Volete entrare?*” said the young girl to Mrs. Wyndham and Emily, throwing open the parlor door.

The room was not empty. Before the little mirror, almost opposite the door, stood a lady who, with both arms raised above her head, was arranging an orange blossom in her hair. She was dressed in creamy white, and a little gold-colored shawl of Italian silk hung about her shoulders.

With the quickness of the feminine perception with regard to the attire and personal appearance of those of their own sex, Mrs. Wyndham and Emily immediately “took in” the faultless appointments of this lady’s toilette

and the magnificent braids of red-gold hair twisted about her head.

But they were struck with admiration, which showed plainly in their faces, when, having concluded the operation of securing the flower, the lady turned, disclosing a countenance of almost perfect beauty. They saw no defect in her : not in the hair that rippled away from the low forehead, although some might not prefer its color ; not in the large, deep-set eyes, the regular nose, and the mouth neither too large nor too small ; nor in the beautifully shaped head and full white throat about which she wore a soft tulle ruche fastened by a heavy brooch of Roman gold. She was perhaps rather too stout for her height, but neither Mrs. Wyndham nor her daughter was inclined to find fault with this ; for, like so many of her American sisters, Emily was too thin ; and her mother had attained unwieldy proportions.

The possessor of all the above-mentioned perfections gave one swift glance at the newcomers, with which she doubtless "took them in" also ; then, with an inclination which was half a bow and half a courtesy, accompanied

by a murmured "Pardon, mesdames" as she passed before them, she left the room.

"She's a beauty!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham as the figure of the fair unknown disappeared in the corridor.

"She is the loveliest creature I ever saw," cried Emily enthusiastically, "and, of course, she is staying here. O, Harold," she continued as her lover appeared (for he was her lover, and they had been engaged for several years), "we have just seen the most beautiful woman in the world. I do wish you had been here. You will go wild about her. She has red hair — just the shade you like — that lovely color that is in the Venetian pictures."

Harold smiled at the young girl's enthusiasm.

"She is probably staying in the house," he said, "and if so, there is time enough. Here is the waiter to show us our rooms. The stairs are not hard, and it is much pleasanter on the upper floor. Will you come now, ma'am?"

Mrs. Wyndham rose from the sofa, and they all followed the waiter to the apartments allotted them.

“*Diner à sept heures, mesdames,*” remarked that individual, preparatory to closing the door of the ladies’ room.

“There is a whole hour to rest in, mamma,” said Emily; “now you lie right down and get a nap, and I will wake you in time for dinner.”

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

WHEN the Wyndhams and Harold Hart descended to the *table d'hôte*, Emily found, to her great satisfaction, that their places were opposite that of the beautiful woman they had already seen. As they took their seats, this lady acknowledged their arrival by a bow.

There were perhaps twenty persons present, but in this inconsiderable number several nationalities were represented. At one end of the table was a party of Russians, talking volubly, in a loud tone of voice, in their impossible tongue. Beyond them were three Germans, two of whom, belonging to the old school, sat with their elbows on the table and

their heads in their plates, evincing a sublime indifference as to which utensil, knife or fork, conveyed their food to their mouths, plying first one and then the other, or sometimes serving themselves with both at once, and all this with such rapidity that their plates were always cleared before the servant in attendance could make the half circuit of the table. Seated beside them, but not of their party, was the third German, a good specimen of the most civilized class of the present generation. He had refined, even elegant manners, and regarded his countrymen's performances with almost as much horror as they awakened in the Anglo-Saxon breast. Between this gentleman and the Beauty, as Emily, in her own mind, had designated the lady who had so excited her interest and admiration, were a young Italian couple, evidently on their wedding journey, and a short, thickset man in the Italian uniform. The young couple were too much occupied with each other to pay much attention to their neighbors, and the German gentleman occasionally cast longing glances across them in the Beauty's direction, for he

had overheard the “wunderschöne Frau” speaking German, and would fain have made her acquaintance. With the exception of an American lady with two charming daughters, to one of whom a young Englishman was paying violent court, the rest of the company belonged to the single female genus, — one German, two or three Scandinavians, and half a dozen English maidens, varying in age from twenty-five to sixty.

It was not a particularly brilliant assembly, and except the Russians, no one spoke while the soup was being served. When the fish was fairly under way, however, Emily, who had soon laid down her fork, ventured to look up, and found the eyes of her opposite neighbor fixed upon her with a smile responding to her own.

Then the Beauty opened the conversation with the conventional question: “Is this your first visit to Sorrento?”

The powers be praised! she spoke English. Emily, who had studied her furtively during the first moments of dinner, had been quite unable to decide upon her nationality. There

was something so foreign about her general style and manner that the young girl feared that, should those lovely lips open for her, it would be to propound the problem: "Parlez-vous français, Mademoiselle?"

Like most American girls of her station in life, Emily knew French, but it was what might be called the French of necessity. She could supply her own and her mother's wants in railway stations and hotels, but she could not express herself fluently nor sustain a conversation in the French tongue. In the New England States we are too rarely brought into contact with foreigners to acquire much facility in speaking foreign languages, and Emily had not been long enough in Europe to correct this deficiency. Therefore it was with a sense of relief that she heard the words: "Is this your first visit to Sorrento?"

The Beauty not only spoke English, but spoke it without accent, only with some precision of pronunciation, and with a certain delicacy and "fineness," if one may so call it, not uncommon in persons who have been long absent from their native soil, and who have

become accustomed to use foreign languages oftener than their own.

“Yes,” answered Emily, a glow of pleasure overspreading her face, “we have never been here before. We drove from Naples, stopping at Pompeii on the way.”

“Is not Pompeii a wonderful place?”

“O, most wonderful! I hated to come away, except that one gets so tired walking over the stones and seeing so much. Mamma was completely exhausted.”

“Your mother should have been carried about,” said their new acquaintance, “there are comfortable chairs and good bearers.”

“I should not dare to trust myself in one of those arrangements,” interposed Mrs. Wyndham with decision; “I am too heavy for the men; they would be sure to let me fall.”

“I want very much to return there some time,” continued Emily. “We thought we two at least might go by ourselves, did we not, Harold?”

“Yes,” he answered, “and it is certainly easy enough to drive from here. One could get up rather early in the morning, and it

must be pleasant to do that here, though we are very lazy people.”

“The early morning is the most beautiful part of the day in these warm countries,” said their new friend, thus indirectly addressed. “If you stay here long, you will have to accustom yourselves to early rising. At least in the summer it is best to adopt the habits of the natives. They rise with the sun, go to bed again in the middle of the day, and sit up half the night. As for Pompeii, it is a drive of not more than two or three hours, as you have seen to-day. You can start in the morning, spend the whole day there, and drive home towards night. Or you can choose a time when there is a moon, and visit the ruins by moonlight. One can obtain permission from the director of the museum at Naples.”

“That would be delightful!” exclaimed Emily, “thank you for suggesting it.”

The conversation lingered for a time on the subject of Pompeii, and then turned upon the beauty of the road to Sorrento, which Emily declared to be the “loveliest she had ever seen.”

“I understand your enthusiasm,” said the Beauty. “I shall never forget the impression it made upon me when I came over it for the first time, with my father, many years ago. It was a season much like this, far advanced and warm; the trees were loaded with blossoms and the fields with flowers. For us Northerners there is a great charm in the Southern vegetation; everything is so rich and exuberant. Before one is used to such prodigality in Nature it almost takes away one’s breath.”

There was a pause in the conversation, during which they all proceeded with their dinner, and the Beauty exchanged a few remarks with her neighbor, the Italian captain.

After a time Mrs. Wyndham began again. “My daughter tells me that this house was an old monastery.”

“I believe it was,” returned the Beauty.

“That is the reason why my young folks were bent on coming here,” continued the old lady; “they thought it would be so romantic. I told them I thought we had much better go to a place that was meant for a hotel, where we could have things as they ought to be; but

Emily thought she knew what she was about, so of course we came; and now I have got here, it isn't a bit like what I expected. I supposed we had got to sleep in cells, but I don't see that any one needs a bigger room than ours. It isn't my idea of a monastery at all."

"I presume there have been a good many changes in the old place since the days when the monks inhabited it," replied the Beauty, "but traces of their rule are still left in the multitude of corridors and terraces and the little chapel where we may hear Mass on Sunday mornings, not to mention the court with its convent well. But if you wish to live in a real monastery and sleep in a cell, you must go to the Capuccini in Amalfi. The old Capuccini monastery there has lately been fitted up as a hotel, very comfortably, but with as few alterations as possible. It is quite unique."

"It must be charming," exclaimed Emily, "we must go there, mamma."

"Some people prefer Amalfi to Sorrento," continued the Beauty, "but I think this pref-

erable for a long visit. Do you intend to stay here some time?"

"I think we shall," replied Mrs. Wyndham. "I am tired to death of visiting churches and looking at pictures, and jogging about from one place to another. Besides, I suppose this is really a warm climate in the summer time, and I should like to get thawed out for once. I have not felt really warm since I left America. You have such miserable little fireplaces here; all the heat goes up the chimney. In some places, even, all they give you is a little dish with coals in it, — what do you call it? a scaldino? — to warm your hands upon, and smile upon you and expect you to be contented. Talk about the sunny South! Why, I never was so cold in my life as I have been this winter in Italy."

The Beauty smiled. "It is the general complaint of our country people at first, for I am American by birth," she added with a smile to Emily, "although you seem incredulous of the fact."

"I could not make up my mind," said Emily. "I thought you could hardly be

French or Italian and speak English so perfectly; and of course I knew you were not English."

The Beauty smiled again, and Mrs. Wyndham declared triumphantly, "I knew the lady was an American the moment I set eyes on her; being what she is, she could not be anything else." This time the Beauty laughed outright.

"I am much obliged to you for your kind opinion, madam," she said; "but reserve it until I can show you some of my European friends."

"I don't want to see your European friends," replied the old lady, good-humoredly; "my own people are enough for me."

By this time the dinner, which was neither especially elegant nor of long duration, drew to a close, and several of the guests rose from their chairs.

"They are hurrying a little to-night," the Beauty explained, "for there is to be a dance. The padrone and a party of English people who take their meals upstairs are celebrating a birthday, I believe. You are just in time

for the last gayety of the season, or rather for the first of the new season, for of course there have been no dances during Lent."

"O, but *I* shall not come," said Emily. "I am not invited, and I do not know any one."

"That makes no difference; every one in the house is expected. You will have plenty of partners, and, I think, a very 'good time,' as the Americans say. Nor can we, I am sure, spare such an eligible cavalier as your — brother?" hesitating a little over the last word.

"Miss Wyndham and I are engaged to be married," said Harold, abruptly, like one awakened from a dream. He had hardly spoken throughout the meal, but his eyes had been fixed upon his opposite neighbor, watching every movement and change of expression of her beautiful face.

"Oh!" said the Beauty; "will you not bring your *fiancée* to the dance, monsieur? What a pity we have no English word to express so delightful a relation!"

"I fear it will be too much for my daughter after this fatiguing day," said Mrs. Wyndham.

“O no, mamma,” exclaimed Emily, “I am not tired at all.”

“Emily does not seem overfatigued, Mrs. Wyndham; do let us go and look on for a time at least,” urged Harold.

“Well, for a little while then,” consented the old lady. “I suppose we ought to go and get ready at once.”

“It would be as well. Just take a look at our Sorrento English,” continued their new acquaintance, calling their attention to a sort of tablet on the wall beside the door through which they were leaving the dining-room.

The party paused, and Harold read aloud:—

ADVICE TO STRANGERS GENTLEMEN.

The proprietor of the house to let, spent, to strangers, the regular price, in the service of the carriages, horses, and boats, has select, some persons of his confidence, who offer regularly, the price of tariff.

ASSES OR HORSES FOR SADDLE.

Carriage for the walk to Castellammare, frs. ———

Ass for the walk to Massa, frs. ———

Is always, at the disposition of stranger, to give the so say, buona mano, or drink-money, when they will be well served.

“Well! that beats everything I have seen yet,” exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham.

“The last sentence is the most intelligible. There is never any doubt about that, I fancy,” said Harold.

“It is lucky I put your white nun’s veiling into the valise, Emily,” said her mother, as they entered their room. “Who knows when the rest of the luggage will be along? Well, this new travelling dress is good enough for an old woman like me.”

When they descended again, the lower part of the house had undergone a complete transformation. The salon was decorated with huge bouquets of wild and garden flowers, and a refreshment table, covered with sandwiches, cakes, lemonade, and Marsala wine was arranged in one corner. The upright piano stood close beside the dining-room door. All the furniture had been removed from the dining-room, at one end of which stood the musicians, four in number, in striped woollen shirts and black trousers, with scarlet sashes tied round their waists. Their instruments were two violins, a guitar, and a mandolin.

The Beauty was already in the salon. She came forward to greet her new acquaintances. She had exchanged her light woollen dress for one of creamy lace ; in her hair and upon her bosom she wore a cluster of white wild roses. She cast upon Emily a scrutinizing glance, which changed instantly into one of approbation. "Only you have no flowers," she said, as if completing a mental sentence ; and unclasping a little diamond brooch which held her roses, in spite of Emily's protestations she fastened them upon the bodice of the young girl's frock. "They are much more suitable to you than to me," she said with a smile. "I wish I could get them out of my hair too, but I am afraid I should only succeed in tearing it badly. O, Signor Capitano," she continued, addressing the Italian officer, "let me present you to Miss Wyndham." "He speaks a little English," she whispered to Emily, "and he dances pretty well. There is the archdeacon, who has conducted the English church services here this winter," she went on to Mrs. Wyndham. "You must know him. They call him the fighting parson, because when he was

chaplain in the army he used to go into battle with his men. He is a fine man, and fond of Americans. There are the Listers — the lady with the pretty daughters whom you saw at dinner. I should like to introduce you to Miss Maud Lister before she is engaged for all the dances, Mr.” —

“My name is Hart,” said Harold.

“Thank you. She is a charming country-woman of yours and a great favorite — plays the violin extremely well. Her sister Gretchen is a nice girl too. They have lived so long in Germany that they seem half German, but they are none the worse for that.”

“It is very kind of you to interest yourself in my young people,” said Mrs. Wyndham, when, various introductions having been accomplished, the Beauty returned to her side.

“Travellers so seldom get any social enjoyment that it seems a pity they should not profit by what little comes in their way,” was the reply. “Then you see yourself that your young people are a great addition to this little company. I do not suppose I should have come myself but that they need me to help

them with their music. These men cannot play quadrilles."

While they were speaking the musicians began to play a polka, and the "ball," as the English people called it, had soon commenced in earnest.

Wonderful to relate, there were plenty of gentlemen, generally *rarissimæ aves* among the English-speaking circles of the Continent. Besides the few available visitors at Sorrento and two or three Italian officers, a party of young artists had come from Capri, intending to sail back at dawn. The merriment was not confined to the young people; the middle-aged and the elderly entered heartily into the spirit of the occasion, dancing with right goodwill. The archdeacon skipped through the Lancers with Emily, and even indulged in a polka with a little English girl.

"I never saw people seem to enjoy themselves so well," exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham, with admiration.

"Yes, the English are not nearly so languid as ourselves. They are as willing to be amused at fifty as at twenty-five. I think it is a charming trait."

Harold and Emily danced together several times, and for the rest the Beauty took care that they were always provided with partners. She herself refused continual invitations to dance. In the intervals of playing quadrilles she seated herself beside Mrs. Wyndham, from whom, by an adroit question or two, she had soon elicited all her simple history. She and her daughter came from a suburb of that worthiest of cities, popularly known as the hub of the universe ; her husband, an officer in one of its principal banks, had been dead nearly three years. Emily had always wanted to come to Europe, but Mr. Wyndham could never find an opportunity to leave home, and his wife could not bring her mind to come away without him. They had thought of sending Emily with friends, but she was their youngest and only remaining child, the others having died in infancy ; and when it came to the point they could not bear to part with her, so they “coaxed her to wait.” A short time before her father’s death she had become engaged to Harold Hart, whom she had known more or less all her life. He was a New Yorker, but the two families

had been in the habit of exchanging frequent visits. He had, according to Mrs. Wyndham, made as much progress in his art as was possible in America, and, not long after his engagement, had gone to Paris, where he had been wearing himself out with work ever since. When he started, they expected to follow him within a short time, but what with Mr. Wyndham's death and other illness in the family, and business that would not get settled, their journey had been delayed more than two years, and they had now been in Europe only about six months. They had travelled a little in Switzerland and spent some time in Paris. Then, Mr. Hart having fallen ill from overwork, they had brought him away to Italy. They had passed a month in Florence and a month in Rome, and, lately, a few days in Naples.

“Both he and Emily were crazy to come down here,” concluded Mrs. Wyndham, “and if they like it, I daresay we shall stay all summer. Emily wishes to return to Rome in the autumn, unless she concludes to be married, in which case, of course, we shall go to Paris; and then I suppose we shall settle down and live

there until Mr. Hart has learned all he wants to and thinks it is time to go home. Emily is rather young to marry ; she is not quite twenty-one yet, though you might perhaps take her to be older — she was always old for her age, — so I am glad they have not been in a hurry. Still they have been engaged a good while and too much waiting is not desirable either. But they'll settle it between themselves as they think best."

Thus spoke Mrs. Wyndham, calmly and contentedly, as if she were recounting the most natural things in the world ; while her listener, whose ideas were modified by a long European experience, felt some inward amusement at finding herself in the presence of one of those not infrequent American *ménages* where the children govern the parents, in reversal of the natural order of things. However, in this instance the youthful daughter seemed to rule mildly and well, and with a fair show of respect, and the mother to submit gladly, almost gratefully, to her control.

The evening was far advanced, and Mrs. Wyndham was in the midst of a long narrative

of certain Swiss experiences when she was interrupted by Harold's approach. He bowed low before the Beauty.

"Will you waltz with me, madame?" he asked abruptly.

"With pleasure," she replied, rising and laying her hand upon his arm.

They floated away, followed by the admiring glances of the English ladies.

"Well, it *is* jolly to see such dancing," said one.

"O, it is indeed the poetry of motion," exclaimed another, raising her eyes to the ceiling.

"Well, he would be turned out of a London ball-room if he were to reverse like that," said her brother, who had just released her. "I thought he would run me down."

"But he did not. I fancy there is no danger. Shall we try again?"

Harold bent his head towards his partner's. A delicate perfume of flowers seemed to emanate from her whole person and penetrate his being. Was it the roses she wore in her hair? Emily had such roses also, but he had not noticed this fragrance when he danced with her.

“I have not waltzed before since I have been on this side of the water,” he said, as they revolved. “I hardly dared to try with Miss Wyndham to-night.”

“Yet Miss Wyndham dances extremely well, and so do you.”

“I have been wanting to ask you all the evening,” Harold continued, “but I saw you refuse every one. I only now found my courage.”

“You are the only American here except old Mr. Green,” replied his partner. “I do not care to waltz with any but Americans, and I care for nothing but waltzing. Dancing is our national accomplishment; do you not think so?”

“I suppose so,” answered Harold. “Are you tired,” he asked at last; “do you want to stop?”

“No, no, I could keep on all night.”

She had hardly spoken when the music suddenly ceased. They rejoined Mrs. Wyndham, at whose side Emily was standing panting, just released from the vigorous gambols of a young Italian lieutenant.

“I do not want to interfere with you, Harold,” said Mrs. Wyndham, but it is after midnight, and Emily ought not to sit up any longer. Come, my dear, we really must go.”

“Very well,” said the young girl, “I am ready.”

“How can I thank you enough !” she added, turning to her new friend.

“I hope you have enjoyed yourself,” said the latter smiling.

“O !” cried Emily, “I have had more than the good time you promised me ; I have had a ‘splendid time,’ as I used to say when I was a little girl. I think this has been the most perfect day of my life. First Pompeii with its wonder and mystery ; then the beautiful drive here ; and then this delightful evening. I feel as if I had drifted into fairyland.”

“You had better drift into bed as soon as possible,” said her mother. “Good-night, ma’am, and many thanks for your kindness.”

“I thank you too,” said Harold, softly, bowing over the hand the Beauty extended to him.

“She is an extremely civil person,” said Mrs. Wyndham, when they had reached their

own apartments. I wonder who she is. We really seemed to get quite intimate. And to think we don't even know her name! She knows ours, but I never thought to ask what hers was."

"I think someone called her Mrs. Raymond, but I am not sure," said Emily.

"They left a hotel book in my room that I might write our names in it. Her name will probably be in that," suggested Harold. "Perhaps I can guess it from among the others."

"Well, just go and try. I confess I should sleep easier if I knew who I'd been talking to all the evening."

"What a charming woman she is," said Emily, lighting the bedroom candle, while her mother seated herself on the edge of the bed.

"Yes, she is a real beauty; though I never knew before that I admired red hair, nor that green eyes were beautiful. They do strike you as rather queer at first, but you get used to them and they are so full of expression. Nor did I ever think before," continued the good lady, musingly, "that a complexion without any color was a pretty thing; and she is so all

of a shade that you can hardly tell where her temples leave off and her hair begins. But somehow it seems just right in her."

Emily acquiesced, busying herself over the contents of the valise until a light tap at the door announced Harold's return.

"If Emily heard our friend called Mrs. Raymond, I have found the name," he said. "Madame la Baronne Helena C. Raimond, Paris."

"Raimond," repeated Mrs. Wyndham, "C. Raimond, Paris." Her face grew very grave. "I am afraid, my dears," she continued, "that we have been very rash, and that we must be much more careful about making acquaintances. I know who this Baroness Raimond is. She was Helena Cameron, and her father, Dan Cameron, was one of the wildest and most disreputable fellows that ever went out of New England. He and his daughter spent their lives rampaging over Europe, and finally he married her to a Frenchman. Whatever became of the husband I don't know; something dreadful, I believe. Her aunt, a most estimable woman, used to visit in New Haven at the time I did, when we were both young girls.

But from all I have heard about this niece, she is the last person with whom I should wish my daughter to associate. Of course we must be polite," continued the good lady, relenting a little before the severity of her own sentence, "for we have gone and accepted her civilities; but we must not be intimate. You, Emily, and you too, Harold, must be as cool as you decently can, and we must avoid her as much as possible. And now, good-night, Harold. I can't hear anything about it now. I am dead tired and want to get to bed."

In spite of Mrs. Wyndham's anxiety concerning their new acquaintance, and in spite of Emily's excitement, she and her daughter were soon asleep; but Harold lay long with wide-open eyes, while the sound of dance music drifted up from below, and the vision of that beautiful head with the red-gold hair and the sweet, mysterious eyes lingered upon his brain.

Whether Mrs. Wyndham's doubts as to the desirability of Helena Raimond's companionship for her daughter were justifiable or not will be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

HELENA'S HISTORY.

THE first thing that Helena recollected, far back in the depths of her infant consciousness, was a multitude of lights; then a vast space in which these lights sparkled and twinkled, as, afterwards, the stars that fill the Southern heavens had shone above her, as she had sailed, in summer evenings, through the tranquil waters of the Mediterranean. But the lights of her babyhood were more in number, brighter and nearer earth, than the stars. In one direction was an immense confused blot, like that which falls before the eyes of a person suddenly affected by giddiness, and above that were many rows of forms which seemed mar-

vellously suspended in mid-air, for the child could detect no visible means of support. But she was not frightened, nor did her attention long wander to anything beyond the immediate circle of her vision, for though the wide space in which the people seemed to float was wonderful enough, yet close about her was a species of fairyland still more enticing. Here were trees greener and more luxuriant than any she afterwards saw during her walks in the New York parks, and their backs were studded with many colored lamps.

On one side a broad cascade fell noiselessly to the ground ; its diamond showers, reflecting all the colors of the rainbow, disappearing miraculously as they touched the earth, and not at all wetting the feet of the persons who stood near. In the background was a glittering palace, and all about a race of beings who appeared its fitting inhabitants,—fairies or angels,—some in snowy white, some in delicate pink or green or blue ; some with long, loosely flowing robes ; many with a decided lack of drapery ; and all with very white skins and very red cheeks ; some with golden wands in their

hands and some with rainbow-tipped wings to their shoulders. These beautiful creatures reclined upon mossy banks, or stood, half embracing each other, in groups of varied outlines and contours, and among these last Helena saw other little children like herself. But these children all had wings and gossamer robes, and were so lovely that she thought they could not be akin to her, until, looking down at her own little person, she found that her robes swept the ground, and that her tiny feet were encased in golden slippers, and, although she could not see her own back, she began to trust that her wings might have sprouted too. The palace with the shining walls was the "Abode of Bliss," by a residence in which a much-persecuted youth and maiden were to be rewarded for their unswerving adherence to the paths of virtue. The glittering beings about it were the protecting fairies, the Christian virtues, and the heathen muses (alias the corps de ballet), who, in delightful confusion, were assembled in honor of the virtuous pair. The scene of the struggles and triumphs of the above-mentioned deserving couple was the stage of a

certain New York theatre, among the first to produce one of those spectacular plays which, for some years, were such favorite species of entertainment with the American public.

And now the palace began to glow with a pale, green light; then that faded, giving place to a vivid scarlet, and finally, wonderful to relate, the whole structure parted in the middle, disclosing new groups of sylphs, among whom the youth and maiden reclined upon a golden couch, while, above them, rose slowly through the air a radiant figure, the guardian and protectress of their fates. She was robed in white and gold, and her neck and beautiful arms were bare. A golden star glittered upon her brow, and her luxuriant black hair fell almost to her feet, enveloping her like a mantle. She held in her hand a wand with which she pointed to the happy pair below.

A salvo of applause burst from the parquet and a great stamping of feet from the gallery, mingled with shouts of "Bravo," and a cry or two of "Rose Lazare!" Helena was frightened by the noise, and, happening to look up in her terror, recognized in the face of that

lovely vision, hanging amid the pasteboard clouds, the well-known features of her mother. Her little arms were outstretched in a moment, and a childish treble called "Mamma! Mamma!" A fairy at her side (otherwise a young girl who often took care of Helena, and who was called Annette) hastily placed her hand over the child's mouth, and the cry was lost amid the boisterous plaudits of the audience. But it had reached the mother's ears, and, unmindful of her precarious position, she leaned forward anxiously to catch a glimpse of her little girl. The light fabric that supported her rocked ominously, she seemed about to fall, and a thrill of horror ran through the house; but only the wand dropped from her hand with which she caught at the rope at her side, recovering her equilibrium with a smile. The applause became stormier than ever, and then a veil passed between the supernatural inhabitants of fairyland and the sea of faces beyond the footlights: the curtain had fallen. When it rose for the second and third time upon the transformation scene, one group was slightly displaced: Annette and Helena had left the stage.

When Rose Lazare was lowered from her position in the clouds and touched *terra firma* again, she received a reprimand from the manager of the theatre for having been so near losing her balance and causing a scandal on the first representation of the new piece; besides which, as she knew very well, he had no one to replace her, possessing her personal attractions and so great a favorite with the public. But with a quick word or two, Rose demonstrated to him that her escape from an accident had but disposed that same public more warmly than ever in her favor, and, leaving him somewhat astonished at her audacity, she hastened to her dressing-room. Here, snatching her little daughter in her arms, and throwing herself into a chair regardless of the injury to her tulle and tarletan draperies, she rocked the child to and fro on her breast, covering her with kisses. Her magnificent hair swept the ground as she bent over her baby, and the two formed the most charming picture of a Madonna and child conceivable; but it was a Madonna with the tresses of a Mary of Egypt whose locks were permitted to

grow in the desert and cover her with a garment, in default of more ordinary vestments.

In this position of a doting mother Daniel Cameron found her when he reached her dressing-room, having been detained on his way thither by one and another of his acquaintances. He could not but be struck, in spite of himself, by the tableau presented to his gaze ; but he would not allow himself to be turned by it from the legitimate indignation which moved him.

“ Rose,” he said, sternly, “ did I not strictly forbid you ever to take the child on to the stage or even to bring her to the theatre, now that it is no longer necessary and she is old enough to notice what goes on about her ? ”

“ I know, *mon ami*,” returned Rose Lazare, in a supplicating tone. “ I only meant to try the clothes on her, but she looked so angelic, and Mr. Forrest wanted some more children, and —— ”

“ And you thought I was safe in New England, for Heaven knows how long, and you could gratify your vanity and put a few more paltry sous in your pocket. You are just like

all the rest of them. Do you suppose I gave you my name —— ”

“ Which I do not bear, monsieur,” interrupted Rose, with a faint attempt at defiance.

“ But which you will bear, you know very well,” said Daniel sharply, “ and, what is more, which the child will bear, in my family and before the world. Do you suppose I made you my wife, I say, that you might bring up my daughter among the same miserable lot with which you are implicated ? ”

Rose Lazare winced, but made no reply. She could bear a great deal from this man whom she adored ; and, like so many women, when a slap was given her on one cheek by one she loved, was only too ready to turn the other for a similar correction.

“ Take Helena,” continued Mr. Cameron, to Annette, who had re-entered the room, and stood transformed into rather a pretty-looking French girl in a black alpaca dress, “ take Helena and take off that ridiculous rig, and never let me see it again. And you, Rose, get your own clothes on ; it is very late and you have fooled away too much time already over

the child. And let me tell you once for all: if I ever see my daughter carried on to this miserable stage again, or even brought within the walls of this house without my express permission, wife or no wife, everything is over between us."

"I will do as you say, *mon ami*," said his wife submissively.

"Besides," continued Mr. Cameron, after a pause, speaking in a milder tone as he watched her while she removed the star from her forehead, twisted her hair in a great rope about her head, and unclasped her golden zone, "you came very near falling yourself, Rose. It is absurd to give one's self the possibility of such an emotion. We should have had a panic in the house, and you a broken limb, or just as likely a broken neck."

In an instant Rose was at her husband's side, and, bending over his hands, pressed them as her lips.

"Would you have cared, David childre asked, in the softest of utterances the disposition slight foreign lingering upon it is of his name, which was in was "

But Daniel Cameron was not to be mollified by any female blandishments. He freed himself from his wife's tender clasp and replied briefly, "Hurry!"

So Rose hurried, and after a few moments all four passed out of the stage-entrance, before which a carriage awaited them.

"Get in," said Daniel, as Rose hesitated with one foot on the step, turning back to look at him inquiringly.

"You are not coming, dear?" she asked.

"No," answered Daniel, "I can't to-night. I have an engagement, and too much to do early to-morrow morning. Good-night."

He stooped and kissed his wife's forehead, touched lightly with his lips the cheeks and mouth of his little daughter, now sleeping soundly in Annette's arms, shut the carriage door, and motioned to the coachman to drive

demain, cher Daniel," said Rose's soft
ting back through the fog and the
that was falling, and he began
er he should not have done
e home with the gentle,

loving Rose, and neglected his engagement and his business the next day.

But it was too late now ; so, lighting a cigar, he set off briskly in the direction of his club.

As he walked along, the events of the past few years rose more vividly than usual before his mind, and he asked himself if he had not been a consummate fool ; but the innocent face of his baby daughter appeared to his mental vision, bringing as a reply to all his doubts and uncertainties that he had only been an honest man and the victim, perhaps, of circumstances over which he had had, or choose to think he had had, no control.

Daniel Cameron was the son of a New England family of old and uncontaminated stock, whose daughters were, if not especially fair, at least excellent and virtuous, and whose sons were brave when there was need of that quality, and always upright and honorable as well as shrewd. Why, after many generations of exemplary conduct in parents and children a certain lawless and ungovernable disposition should have appeared in him it is difficult to comprehend ; but that he was “

to manage," his friends and family unani-
mously agreed. At the close of a stormy
childhood he entered college, and took his
degree at the time-honored institution of Har-
vard University; then he persuaded his father
to send him to a German university, and then
to Paris, where he imbibed much knowledge,
especially in the ways of the world. He was
immensely fond of books and had a passion
for languages both ancient and modern. Peo-
ple said of him, and with considerable truth,
that he might "make anything of himself if
he only had a mind," but though he was
brilliant, he was lazy.

After his return from Europe he "thought
of" the law as a profession, but there was too
much drudgery about its commencement to
suit a person of his restless and changeable
temperament. Then he "thought of" medi-
cine, which presented itself as a more romantic
and exciting pursuit to his imagination; but
after a trial he professed to doubt the strength
of his nerve, and abandoned his drugs and
instruments. Next he "thought of" journal-
ism, but finally, renouncing that, determined

to enter upon a purely literary career, and to win for himself a place of honor among the crowned of fame.

Of course a man of his habits and experience could not be expected to live contentedly in the quiet New England village where his parents and sister had their ancestral home: the city of Boston was too provincial, and the unknown West "good enough for fellows who had to make their fortunes; *his* father, thank Heaven, could provide him with a sufficiently liberal allowance."

New York was, in his estimation, the only spot in America where one could live with tolerable ease and comfort; and in New York he accordingly took up his residence, writing a little, now and then, in a desultory way, occasionally publishing an article or a short poem, in a journal or in one of the few magazines then in existence; sometimes making some publisher a translation from one many tongues at his command; and rest, belonging to a club, giving and bachelor dinners, playing cards, and visiting the theatres. In one of the

was one evening attracted by the name of Rose Lazare figuring rather conspicuously on the play-bill. When, afterwards, the owner of the name pirouetted before him, he remembered distinctly having seen her a few years before, a young girl of sixteen or seventeen, on the boards of a small Parisian theatre. Rose Lazare was not remarkable in any branch of her profession, though she did a little something in almost every theatrical line; but she was very beautiful. She was small and slight, her face was a delicate oval, her features regular, her eyes soft and dark, and her hair, sombre as a raven's wing, so thick and long that it seemed as if her graceful figure must bend beneath its weight. She was the child of French peasants, and had once worked in the fields herself; but at the death of her last surviving parent, her mother, a distant relative, who had been in the service of a great lady and excelled in the world, fancied that something might be gained from such unusual nerve, she persuaded the young girl to go to Paris, where she found a place, as figurante in a little theatre.

Here Rose learned to read and write, and, if she were not particularly intelligent, neither could she be called stupid. Her new surroundings developed in her a great deal of that swift tact which is one of the most enviable qualities of the French, and she was blessed with a perfectly sweet and amiable disposition. Slowly but surely she rose in her profession, till she could command a little salary sufficient for her modest needs and those of the ancient cousin who remained with her until her death, after which time Rose drifted with a theatrical company to America.

Daniel Cameron was immensely struck by the young woman's beauty, which several years of the harassing life of the stage had not been able to tarnish, but only to mature and perfect. It was the easiest thing in the world for him to make her acquaintance and pay her his court, while Rose returned his advances with a passion as sudden and violent as it was honest and sincere. She never thought of the advantages which might accrue to her from the conquest of his affections; she yielded herself utterly to the captivating power of her

lover, and required neither promises nor vows. Perhaps a more designing conduct on her part could not have accomplished what was effected by the generous confidence of her love. Cameron married her legally and lawfully, and a little girl was born to them whom David called by his favorite name — Helena. But while he felt that he had behaved in an almost Quixotically loyal manner towards the woman who loved him, he was in constant terror of the consequences of his act. His father, Squire Cameron, was a man of the most rigid principles and the most stubborn New England prejudices. The stage itself was a horror and abomination in his eyes, and the human beings connected with it the progeny of Satan; while the French nation was, everybody knew, wicked and profligate to the last degree, fit subjects for the wrath of the Lord. From the day when their first Puritan ancestor set foot on the New England coast, down to the present time, there had never been a taint upon the immeasurable respectability of the race, besides which the Camerons were one of the few American families who could trace their lin-

eage back past our own Colonial times to its roots in the old country — English on one side, Scotch on the other,— and they were as proud of their descent as a prince might be of his royal blood. Daniel Cameron perfectly understood his father's pride, and, it must be confessed, felt a sort of sneaking sympathy with it. Besides, who could be certain that the old man, in horror at the younger one's disregard for all the traditions which his people held most sacred, might not turn against him and discard him, only son though he was. Daniel did not feel at all sure of the course the old gentleman would pursue should his son's folly be disclosed to him. He had already had several serious differences with his father, knew well the severity of which he was capable, and did not care to again incur the storm of his wrath. He knew that only by some happy stroke of fortune would he ever acquire power and wealth; for he was of too unstable a character to attain those desirable ends by means of a constant and conscientious application to any given employment. He might have said as truly as any man, "I cannot

work, to beg I am ashamed," and he did not like to imagine a future in which his father's support should be withdrawn. So Helena's existence was concealed as much as possible; and when it did become generally known that Rose Lazare had a child, he took care not to *afficher* himself as its father. His way of living after his marriage was little changed from what it had been before; and Rose, too, lived on in the same little apartment she had formerly occupied in company with Annette, who had conceived a violent attachment for her beautiful countrywoman, and had cast in her fortunes with hers. Rose continued to act and draw her salary, and what had been enough for her sufficed for the baby, too.

Before her marriage, in spite of the demands of her toilette and the expenses of her little *ménage*, Rose, with true French frugality, had often been able to lay aside a small sum for that day which, in the course of her short experience, she had often seen arrive for others,—when some swift and fatal malady blighted the beauty which was all some poor creature's fortune, or her strength had sud-

denly failed, leaving her defenceless against misery and destitution. But now Rose saved no more. There were little suppers for Daniel when he deigned to come home with her to enjoy them, and there were little dinners for Daniel on Sunday evenings, which, the theatres being closed, he spent with his wife and child. But it mattered not: in the old times she had had to think for herself and provide for her own future; now the present was assured, and for the rest there was Daniel. As for him, it humiliated and exasperated him that his wife should be earning her own living independently of him; but what could he do? One of the principal causes of a certain irritability which showed itself in his temper, and a harshness towards Rose, originated from his dissatisfaction with the *status quo*; but he would not alter it by confession. His father was old — who knew how long he might live? Not that Daniel Cameron desired his father's death, but the best of parents are not immortal, and the end would come some time. Or, if that solemn moment were very long delayed perhaps the old man would soften as

vanced, and it would be more possible to speak ; or he himself might meet with some piece of luck which would render him independent of his father, or — something might happen.

Meantime, whenever he did make any money he did not spend it all on himself, but hastened to buy some trinket for Rose or Helena, or he took Rose to dine in a restaurant — for that was her particular passion, to dine in a restaurant where there were many glasses and shining mirrors. And Rose was content: she did not care anything for Daniel's family ; all she wanted was Daniel himself, Daniel kind and tender as he could be in his best mood. Before their marriage he had explained to her his position, and she desired no change in the present situation, nor was anxious to be recognized as his wife in the eyes of the world. She was used to the stage, and happy in her life, arduous and fatiguing though it often was, and she was fond of her companions, with whom her sweet disposition made her a great favorite.

Other women pardoned her beauty because
her seemed to think of it ; for just as

only talent is conceited, while genius never is, so she was too beautiful to be vain.

Neither did it make any difference to her friends whether she were married or not; perhaps they would not have liked her so well had they known that she had a legal claim on a "real swell," who, if it were his good pleasure, could at any time acknowledge her as his wife and make a lady of her. So Rose kept her own wise counsel, and everything went on amicably between her and her associates, and this was another of the many cases where ignorance is bliss.

After the night of her first and only appearance on any stage, Helena, for a time, remembered nothing farther. But the blank in her recollection was of short duration, for that remarkable experience had been as a shock bursting her baby intelligence, which soon awoke to slumber no more.

She was never carried to the theatre again, and a young girl was hired who took her out walking when her mother and Annette were at rehearsal, and who sat by her little bed until she fell asleep at night. She never again saw her

mother in her fairy garments of white and gold, but the beatific vision of that memorable evening never faded from her memory; and when, in later years, she thought of her mother, she liked best to recall her as she had seen her then.

For some time nothing was changed in the little household; but on one bitter winter night Rose took a severe cold from which she never recovered. She struggled as long as possible against the insidious malady which attacked her, but was finally obliged to succumb and leave the stage.

Helena remembered how first her mother used to come home earlier than usual, and throw herself exhausted on her bed, from which she rose with difficulty when the hour for her attendance at the theatre struck; and then she remembered how a day came when she started to go as usual, but fell, fainting, on the floor, and when Annette and the servants picked her up there were red spots on her dress.

After that she never went out, but lay from morning till night on the sofa, watching her little daughter play about the room, or often

calling her to come and nestle in her arms, until a hard cough seized her and she was obliged to put the child down again.

At this period the blonde gentleman who had visited them from time to time, and who had taught her to call him "Dan," came much oftener than ever before and she was told to address him as "papa." He never spoke sternly to her mamma now, as had sometimes been his wont; he used only kind and tender words, and there were sometimes tears in his blue eyes; but on his wife's face lay a sweet and gentle smile. Sometimes Helena was sent out for fresh air with her young nurse, who now waited on her mother, and on Sunday mornings Annette took her to walk in the square, of whose trees they could catch a glimpse from the high windows of their little home; but the child liked best staying with her mother, and it was a happy time with her. Sometimes indeed she felt with a child's instinct that her pretty mamma was suffering, and was grieved in a childish way, but her eyes could not see the gradual emaciation, the wasting away from day to day, and how should she know that the hour

was at hand when her mother would leave her forever?

Shortly after the beginning of Rose's illness Helena's bed had been moved into Annette's room, Rose fearing to disturb the child's rest with her cough, and one morning, when Annette came as usual to dress Helena, her eyes were red and swollen, and as she fastened the little frock the child felt tears fall upon her cheek.

"What are you crying for, Annette?" she asked, but Annette did not answer, except by a moist embrace.

When they entered the little room which served for dining-room and parlor, all in one, where Rose was wont to lie, her couch was empty, and then the door of her bedroom opened and papa and a strange man came out.

"Where is mamma?" cried Helena, with a sudden sense of something wrong; "I want mamma."

They soothed her with the usual fictions and promises, and they took her out of doors and bought her bonbons and new toys, and so brought her through the day. But at night she wept and would not be comforted or sleep

until she had received reiterated promises that she should see her mother in the morning. The next day she passionately demanded the fulfilment of Annette's word, and greeted her attempted evasions with a storm of tears. Cameron was present at the scene, and Annette turned to him with an inquiring gesture.

"Show her her mother," he said shortly and moved away.

Annette took Helena by the hand and led her into her mother's darkened room. There she opened the blind a little, and Helena saw her mamma lying on the bed, dressed in a long white robe, with her dusky hair falling loosely about her, as she had so often worn it during the long months of her illness — lying with closed eyes, very white and very still. A great awe crept over the child's soul, but she was not afraid. "May I kiss her?" she asked in a whisper.

"Very gently," said Annette, and lifted the little girl to Rose's side.

Helena stooped and touched her mother's pallid lips with her fresh warm mouth, and as she did so a shiver shot through her frame.

Then Annette closed the blinds and they went out. Helena at the time asked no questions, but when she overheard Annette telling some one who came to inquire for Rose, that she was dead, though she had never heard the word before, she knew perfectly well that it meant her mother would never open her eyes or smile or speak to her again.

In the afternoon she was sent out of doors with the little servant, and when they returned the doors and windows were open, her mother's bed empty, and Annette and her father not in the house. A sense of desolation swept over the poor little thing's heart. The servants could not comfort her. She felt, though she could not have put her feelings into words, that there was some better consolation than that they offered, and she remembered how some one had once told her that people who were good at last became angels and went to live in the sky; and, standing at the window, she watched the clouds floating across the soft spring sky, and wondered if her mother were anywhere "up there," and if she did not want to be with her little girl again.

A few days afterwards Annette dressed her in a new black frock, kissed and cried over her a great deal, and then she and her father drove to the railway station, and she took her first journey in the cars. The transit from the city of New York to the State of Massachusetts was not in those days a matter of as few hours as it is now, and at the end of the railway journey there was a short stage ride, so that it was already evening when they reached the town of L—, and stopped before the large white house with green blinds, where Daniel had been born.

The door was locked, and he was obliged to lift the heavy brass knocker, which fell, resounding with a clang. In a moment a shuffle was heard in the passage within, and the door was opened by an elderly woman bearing an oil-lamp in her hand.

“Lord bless me!” she exclaimed, as she recognized the young man. “You, Mr. Daniel, so unexpected? There ain’t nothing wrong, I hope?”

“N—no, Mary; at least not with me. Where are they all?”

“ They ’re just finishin’ tea ; they ’re very late to-night, for the squire had to go up country about them pasture lands he wants to sell, and he never come home till nigh on to seven o’clock. But sakes alive, what have you got there ? ” she continued, as, unwrapping his cloak, half concealed in which Helena had been clinging to his shoulder, Daniel set his little daughter down on the ground. “ A baby, I declare ! ”

“ A little girl, Mary, that you must be good to and take care of, as you used to of Prue and me. I’ll go into the dining-room and face the music. Come with the light ; there ’s Egyptian darkness here. ”

He spoke lightly, but it was with an emotion so strong as to be almost fear that he entered the room where his family were assembled, leading Helena by the hand. He left the child for a moment, hurrying forward amid a chorus of surprised exclamations, to kiss his mother and sister, and offer his hand to his father.

“ What is that ? ” cried his mother, whose eyes were sharper than her husband’s, pointing

to the tiny figure trembling at the door. Daniel stepped back and lifted her on his arm.

“My little daughter,” he answered, “and her mother, *my wife*,” (with a peculiar emphasis on the words) “is dead.”

Mrs. Cameron's hands went up into the air, her husband dropped the tea-cup which he was in the act of raising to his lips, and they as well as their daughter stared at him in speechless amazement, while an exclamation burst from the faithful Mary in the background: “Well, I never!”

Half asleep, bewildered by the change from the outer darkness to the lighted room, and frightened at the strange faces about her, Helena at this juncture began to cry. It was a most fortunate diversion.

“Give her something to eat,” said Mrs. Cameron, in her usual abrupt manner; “the child's half starved.”

“She is tired, too,” said Daniel, “and”—“not used to strangers,” he was going to add, but checked himself. Whose fault was it that Helena did not know her nearest relatives?

“Don't cry, dear,” he said soothingly,

stroking the child's hair ; " you shall have some nice supper ; some warm milk out of Aunt Prue's silver mug, and some buttered toast."

" What is her name, Dan ?" asked his sister.

" Helena."

" Humph," said his mother. It was not a family name.

" How old is she ? She does n't look more than three or four years old."

" She is just five," replied her father.

" Helena shall sit by her Auntie Prue," said that lady in a caressing tone.

" Quick, Mary, make a high chair for Helena."

The old servant placed, upon the highest chair the room afforded, Josephus and the family Bible, and upon this species of throne the little girl was elevated. Aunt Prue's silver mug was laid away with other relics of her childhood, but the " cambric tea," as Prue called it, a mild decoction of milk and hot water, tasted very good out of a tea-cup, and buttered toast was a new feature in Helena's experience, and possessed all the charm of

novelty. Room was made for Daniel, who seated himself by Helena, and as he ate his supper talked in a quick, excited way of the day's journey, of New York, of the weather — anything and everything seeming preferable to the awkwardness of silence.

No one else said much, but his mother interrupted him in the midst of an involved sentence with the remark, "Why, she's a regular carrot-head."

"She has lovely hair, if it *is* red," said Prudence, smoothing it admiringly.

Daniel hastily despatched his meal and rose, taking the sleepy child in his arms. "She had better be put to bed at once, Prue," he said, "and I'll come with you. She is naturally a little shy at first."

Mary led the way with the lamp, and Prudence and Daniel followed, Mrs. Cameron contenting herself with giving her grandchild a good-night kiss, for she stood not a little in awe of her lord and master, and was very uncertain as to how he might regard any further demonstrations on her part.

But, if the truth were told, Squire Cameron

would have desired nothing better than to relieve his son of his light burden, and carry the child upstairs himself; for the bright-haired, pale-faced little creature in her black dress had at once struck a hidden, tender chord in the old man's heart, and he fancied he could trace a resemblance between her and his favorite sister who had died in childhood.

“That is how she came by her red hair,” he thought to himself.

Meanwhile the others put Helena to bed, and hardly had her golden head touched the pillow when she was asleep.

Her father and aunt stood at the bedside watching her.

All the beauty of the Cameron family had fallen to Daniel's share, Prue's only good feature being her lovely blue eyes, like Daniel's own. For the rest she was too tall, too square-shouldered, too colorless as to complexion, and of that almost painful thinness which characterizes a certain type of American women; but she looked almost beautiful as she stood gazing at the sleeping figure of her brother's child. She was older than Daniel and had lost her

lover in her youth ; but now the patient expression her features always wore was lighted with a sweet joy at the expectation of what warmth and comfort this little visitor might bring into her lonely life.

For, of course, Daniel meant to leave the child with her ; she knew him too well to doubt that.

Daniel turned from his contemplation of his child to look at his sister, and there shot through his heart one of those sudden thrills of affection which even the most indifferent will occasionally feel in the presence of relationship and the close ties of blood.

Besides, he had been much moved by Rose's death, and was in a softer mood than usual.

"Prue," he said gently, "you were always a good sister to me, and I am sure you will do all you can for Helena."

"I will try to be a mother to her, Dan," Prudence answered. "She is a sweet creature, and I am sure her mother must have been a good woman."

"She was a Frenchwoman and an actress," said Daniel, enumerating these awful qualities

as quickly as possible, "but she was a very amiable girl, and very fond of me."

"That is enough for me," said Prue, stoutly.

"Rose had not much education," Daniel continued, "and I have not had time to trouble myself about the child. I daresay you will find her very ignorant."

"I will teach her," said Prudence.

The Camerons were not a demonstrative family,—New England families are not, as a rule, given to much display of affection,—but Daniel put his arm about his sister, and Prue leaned her head against his shoulder and tears gathered in her eyes. But she hastily wiped them away, saying in a firm voice, "Come, let us go downstairs."

They went, Daniel relieved and strengthened at having enlisted his sister's sympathies on his side, and trusting much to the impression Helena might have produced upon her grandparents.

"And now, sir," said Mr. Cameron, when Daniel and Prudence entered the parlor, where their elders awaited them, "will you

be good enough to inform us what all this means?"

Thus adjured, Daniel began a recital of his acquaintance and marriage with Rose, and, although he could not conceal the facts of her nationality and profession, softening as much as possible the more objectionable features of her history, and quite keeping out of sight the enormity that she had ever *danced* on the stage. He dwelt much on the amiability of her character, her faithfulness and affection for him, and the moral obligation under which he had felt himself towards her. He knew that much was gained could he touch the old gentleman's sense of honor. Not a word from any one of his auditors interrupted his narrative, and at its close profound silence reigned.

Finally Mr. Cameron rose, and, taking a bedroom candle, said coldly, without looking at any one in particular, "Good-night," and left the room. His wife followed him, and there was nothing left for Prue and Daniel but to separate for the night.

On the following morning Mr. Cameron returned his son's greeting by a mere inclination

of the head, and though Daniel kept as much as possible in his father's presence the old gentleman remained persistently silent.

"I can't stand this," said Daniel to his sister, after their early dinner. "If you will have Sally harnessed and drive me to the station, I can get up to Boston for the night, and on to New York to-morrow. I have some work to do." And so he fortunately had had for some few months, though, even with this help, he had incurred several debts, owing to the expenses of Rose's illness.

When the carriage was ready he sought his father again. "Prudence has told you, I believe, father, that I think I had better be off to-day. I suppose I may leave Helena under the protection of your roof?"

"Prudence tells me that she desires to bring up your daughter. I shall not oppose her wish," said the old man sternly.

Daniel felt sorely irritated, but struggled to conceal it.

"Thank you, father. I shall feel easy about her," and he held out his hand.

Mr. Cameron hesitated a moment, and then

took the proffered hand in a limp sort of clasp, saying coldly, "Good-by."

Daniel looked forward with considerable trepidation to the day on which he was accustomed to receive his allowance, but the money came as usual, and then he knew that his father had, if not forgiven him, at least concluded not to visit upon him the dreadful punishment of the withdrawal of his support,— and with this he was content.

His son's revelations had doubtless inflicted a severe wound upon old Mr. Cameron's pride; but the mischief was irremediable, the objectionable wife was dead, and the most charming little girl in the world was left as a compensation.

Squire Cameron was a severe-looking man, always dressed in black, with a high collar whose points imprisoned his chin, and a stock. His dark hair, in which scarcely a silver thread was to be seen, was brushed above his ears. His carriage was erect and his movements slow and precise. Almost every one feared him, for he had the reputation of possessing a character as obstinate and unrelenting as it was honorable and upright.

But he made himself Helena's slave, and she ruled him with a royal will. By the hour together he would hold her on his knees in the horsehair-covered rocking-chair, which became transformed into a fiery steed bearing them into space; or he showed her pictures and told her stories, and took her with him about the country until the child was almost as well known as the ancient chaise and the bay horse he had driven for years. He never came home from any expedition on which she could not accompany him without bringing her a present, and his pockets were always filled with barley-candy, "lozengers," and small sweet biscuit that she liked. He never spoke a harsh word to her, always took her part if she were blamed, and even when she once scratched the face of a little visitor knew she "did not mean to do it" and begged her off from punishment. And in return for this devotion Helena was very fond of her grandfather; fonder even than of her Aunt Prue, who taught and cared for her, and in her way worshipped her also. As her father had predicted, she was found woefully ignorant in some respects: she could

not say her prayers, and had exceedingly misty notions of who made her; so she was speedily instructed in the first principles of the Christian religion and taught to repeat "Now I lay me." But although her religious instruction had been so neglected, Helena was more proficient in some branches of knowledge than her father dreamed. On Sunday mornings, when the others went to church, she was left in charge of the faithful Mary, who, sitting before the open fire, and turning the spit of the large tin-kitchen by means of a long wooden handle, read the New Testament aloud. One day Mary miscalled a word, and Helena, whose eyes were always fastened on the book, pointed to the place with her tiny finger and corrected her nurse.

"Sakes alive!" exclaimed Mary, "who learned you to read?"

"I don't know," answered the little girl.

"You read to me, then," said the servant; and so Helena did, stumbling a little at some of the longer words, but acquitting herself remarkably well. Her chief enjoyment had always been to listen to reading and then, with

a child's exact memory, to go over the stories by herself, distinguishing them by the pictures ; and thus, unconsciously to those about her, she had acquired the first and most necessary of accomplishments. When the family returned they were greeted by the announcement of this discovery, and when she had been tried and not found wanting, Helena was immediately presented with a bright five-dollar gold piece by her delighted grandfather. Shortly after this she was allowed to "go to meeting" with her elders, and her pride at this mark of consideration on their part helped her bravely through the dull length of the morning service. Not unfrequently in after life, in glorious cathedrals, amid the pomps and splendors of the Romish ritual, Helena remembered those summer Sunday mornings of her childhood ; — the church with its high pews and bare whitewashed walls, the ladies in big bonnets and black silk suits, the gentle rustle of the palm-leaf fans, and the soft, sleepy air that blew through the open windows, bringing the few outdoor sounds to mingle with the preacher's words. In spite of the longer service, Helena

liked the Communion Sundays best: the oblong bits of bread had a peculiar fascination for her. She always wondered who was hungry and how many pieces each person would take, and when her grandfather, rather to the scandal of his neighbors, shared his morsel with her, she considered it delicious food. One lady who sat in the pew in front of her afforded Helena much mental occupation. She wore a red India shawl, and had a habit of covering all her face with it, except a corner of her right eye, through which she peeped at her fellow-worshippers. "Just as if we could n't see that she's peeking," thought Helena, but she was never weary of watching her and wondering how often she would repeat the performance.

Trivial things these, but these years formed a calm, sunny period in Helena's life, to which, in the exciting, restless existence she afterwards came to lead, she sometimes looked back with a sort of gratitude. Nor was their influence upon her character ever quite obliterated; her career might have been even fuller of error and extravagance than it became had she not had some Puritan blood in her veins and been sub-

jected, during the first years of her opening intelligence, to a Puritan education.

So it is with all of us who have been born and bred within the confines of New England. We may prefer another civilization; we may laugh at the prejudices and narrownesses of our old home; we may change our habits and modes of thought; we may become as aliens and strangers in our native land,—but wherever we go we carry with us certain sentiments and traditions which are as a buckler in times of trouble, as an anchor amid the storms of fate. Let us not forget, then, O my brothers and sisters, we who leave the parent nest to form for ourselves new ties and new associations on foreign shores, in the Old World or the New, to turn sometimes to thank Heaven for New England and Plymouth Rock.

Helena's life with her grandparents lasted five years, and then her grandfather died. She and her aunt were washing the breakfast dishes one morning, according to the praiseworthy custom of New England housekeepers, when a servant appeared at the dining-room door with a frightened face, and called "Miss Prudence."

Prudence went, and a whispered conference ensued. "Helena," said her aunt, at last, in an awed tone, "you must finish without me." She hesitated a moment and then added: "Your grandfather is dead."

The old gentleman had been ailing for some days; he had risen that morning at his usual early hour, then said he felt poorly and would lie down for a while. When his wife, some time later, had gone to speak to him, she had found him lifeless and already cold. He had died of an affection of the heart.

Helena knew now what death meant, and as, in obedience to her aunt's instructions, she mounted on a footstool and began to wash the remaining tea-cups with the long-handled mop, great tears rolled down her cheeks and fell into the basin of hot suds before her.

Since Daniel Cameron had left his daughter in his sister's charge he had only returned two or three times to visit them. He had been in Europe for some time, and travelling in his own country, living as a rule a sort of "hand-to-mouth" life, often in debt, and growing more incapable of settling to anything with every

added year. At the time of his father's death he happened to be in New York, and, of course, came on to the funeral. He stayed in the old homestead for several weeks, attending to the many matters requiring his personal supervision, with some impatience but sufficient energy. But he was dissatisfied with the provisions of his father's will (when was there ever a will which satisfied every one?), quarrelled with his sister because she upheld their father, knew that he was unreasonable, and consequently grew more unreasonable than ever. Finally, he took it into his head that Helena was receiving a very narrow education, professed himself much displeased that, as children will, she had forgotten the French language, which, thanks to her mother and Annette, she had spoken fluently at five years of age, declared that nobody could be taught anything decently in this country, and at last announced his intention of taking her to Europe, whither, now that he was in possession of some portion of his father's property, he meant to return for an indefinite time, and placing her at school in France.

It was a hard blow to Prudence, and a subject of regret to the old lady, though she was less fond of children than her daughter, and sympathized less with this particular one than her husband had done; but she knew it was useless to oppose Daniel when he "took a fancy," as she called it; and Prudence's whole life had been spent in the practice of those much-extolled virtues, Renunciation and Resignation; so with few remonstrances, but an aching heart, she renewed and freshened Helena's wardrobe and prepared her for the journey.

Perhaps it was very ungrateful, but Helena did not feel sorry to go. Her grandfather's death left a great void in her heart which she was eager to fill with something new, and her father, for whom she had a great admiration, fired her imagination with accounts of the pleasures of a sea-voyage and of the wonders to be found on the other side of the water.

Father and daughter sailed on a large packet plying between Boston and Liverpool, and Helena felt some sharp pangs of remorse and grief as she saw her aunt's tears, which

that lady could not control on bidding her good-by. But the pangs were soon forgotten. Helena proved herself an excellent sailor and became a great favorite with all on board. While the voyage lasted everything went well. Every one, from the captain to the stewards, relieved Cameron of the care of his daughter, and he congratulated himself on having brought her with him. But by the time they had travelled leisurely through England, and arrived in Paris, he was heartily tired of being fettered with a child ; of finding himself obliged to arrange his journeys to suit her powers of endurance, and of being forced to stay in at night because he could not leave her alone in hotels. So after a few days in Paris, during which time he showed her some of the fine sights he had promised, her father placed her in a convent recommended to him as an excellent educational institution, and, once assured of her well-being, as one might say, forgot her. For three years Helena lived with the sisters, and it was the most miserable period of her life. They were kind and gentle ; but, accustomed as she had been to almost absolute

liberty, the restraint of school life was intolerable to her. Nor was she used to the companionship of children; their numbers confused and bewildered her; she did not know their games; she could not enter into their feelings. During her residence in the convent she made no intimate friends. With a natural preference for the society of older persons, fostered by the life she had hitherto led, she attached herself to two or three of the nuns, one of whom had a beautiful voice and taught the children music. These lessons and the Vesper services, at which the nuns sang sweetly, were what she enjoyed most; and the musical sister, Anastasie, did all in her power to render the young girl's life less lonely and unhappy. But she dared not show much preference, and her sympathy had to be of a negative sort.

Helena never disclosed to her relatives in America how much she disliked her surroundings; a feeling of mingled pride and shame withheld her; but when she wrote to her father at first she was always imploring him to take her away. His answers were full of vague promises with which he endeavored to quiet

her, though, indeed, he often did intend to fulfil them, had not something always happened to prevent. First it was a journey in Spain; then he fell ill of fever in the South, and after his recovery was obliged to spend some months in Switzerland in order to thoroughly re-establish his health. Then Mrs. Cameron died and he went to America; and so Helena waited and hoped and despaired, until habit had lightened a little the yoke of her existence, and she had acquired patience and endurance, besides the ordinary branches of school education and a thorough knowledge of the French language, which she learned for the second time with extreme facility, and spoke with an admirable accent, or, what is better, no accent at all. Finally, at the close of the third year, she was told that a gentleman wished to see her in the parlor, and the good-natured sister who called her and accompanied her thither smiled significantly. Helena thought it was a certain friend of her father's who had been delegated to look after her occasionally, and with whose family she had spent one memorable vacation; but what was her surprise, and how her color came

and went when in the tall, blonde gentleman who rose to meet her she recognized her father.

Daniel Cameron was a trifle paler and thinner than formerly, and his face wore a look of premature old age ; but he was otherwise unchanged. He was as much surprised at his daughter's appearance as she had been to see him. Helena had always been a pretty child, and had inherited her mother's regular features ; but her father was unprepared for such rare beauty as she now possessed. She had developed young, and although she was only between thirteen and fourteen years of age, her figure had shaped itself into lovely curves, and her hair had darkened a little, and, gathered into a loose net, fell upon her shoulders in a rich auburn mass which would have been the delight of Titian and his followers.

Her father kissed her with some confusion of manner, and placed a chair for her beside his own. The more he talked with her the better pleased he became. That she was exceedingly intelligent he perceived in the first five minutes, and the very repression of the convent discipline had given a subdued soft-

ness to her manner which seemed to him indescribably charming. He had come there with very wavering intentions,—uncertain whether to withdraw her speedily from the convent, or to put her off once more with vague promises, and leave her to complete her education where she was. But he had grown weary — not of wandering, but of wandering alone. He had tasted everything this world has to offer, and some of its delights had begun to turn to ashes on his tongue. He felt he would like, not a fixed dwelling-place and roof-tree — he could never more endure to be fettered to one spot,—but a life wherein there should be some flavor of domesticity, some person who would regard his interests and care for his comfort. He had proposed to Prudence to come abroad and reassume the charge of Helena, the three to travel or live together as inclination might dictate; but Prudence had refused. Her brother had deeply wounded her by so abruptly separating her from Helena, and she was unwilling to submit herself to his further caprices. Her lot was cast in her own country and among her old friends.

But as Daniel conversed with his daughter it gradually dawned upon him that this fair young girl, so refined and intelligent, and apparently so mature, was the last crowning blessing reserved by Providence for the evening of his life. So he told her that he had come to take her away, and that they would go as soon as she could put her things together. A great flush spread over Helena's face as she rose: "I will go and get ready at once," she said. Her father had expected an effusion of delight and gratitude, but he rather respected his daughter the more for her calmness. She felt aggrieved, and, after all, why should she be grateful for what had been promised her so often as to become her due? The Superior was called, and accounts settled, Helena's little packing was soon accomplished, the farewells given and received, and in less than an hour she and her father were driving through the Parisian streets to a hotel in the Rue de Rivoli.

And now began another phase of Helena's career, more brilliant than the preceding ones. Daniel Cameron had sufficient sense of justice

to admit to himself that his daughter had reasonable and legitimate cause for dissatisfaction with him, so he set himself seriously to the conquest of her affections; and as he could be very fascinating when he chose, he soon succeeded in winning from her something of that enthusiastic admiration which Rose had formerly lavished so unreservedly upon him. Now, too, he was not shackled by his daughter's presence. If he chose to be away at dinner or in the evening, she could be served in her room; after which he knew she would employ herself with a book, and then go quietly to bed and to sleep.

But he soon cared less and less for enjoyments in which she could not participate; he preferred dining with her in the brilliant Paris restaurants, or taking her to the theatres and opera, all of which things she saw and heard for the first time, enjoying them with a keen delight. They also spent many hours in the Louvre, and made numerous excursions in the vicinity of Paris, besides visiting all the museums and places of interest in the city itself.

But this was only a little preparatory play, her father told her, before they went to work. "I want you, my dear, to know the other principal languages of Europe as well as you do French, and to do that there is no means but a residence in the countries themselves."

So they went to Germany, and though Daniel did not prefer that country, yet by the aid of unlimited beer and music he managed to exist there until Helena had become proficient in the tongue. A similar process of education was then undergone in Italy, and there Daniel loved to linger, — in the city of flowers, with its galleries and mediæval reminiscences and its enchanting views ; amid the magnificent monuments and soul-stirring memories of the queen city, Rome ; and on the beautiful shores of the Mediterranean and Adriatic.

But it was not enough for Daniel that his daughter should speak and write the chief languages of Europe so perfectly as to be invariably taken for a native of whatever country she happened to be in : he desired her to have a thorough acquaintance with the literature of each land, and he chose for her without regard

to such works as are usually put into the hands of young people, and especially young girls, but everything that contained the best thought of the best writers,— the masterpieces of style and the crowning glories of human genius.

And Helena devoured both poetry and prose with a keen appreciation and intelligent delight which rendered her a most agreeable companion for her father, who loved to talk about books and to recall, in his daughter's opinions, the enthusiasms of his own youth. Finally he took a fancy to teach her Greek and Latin, and was for a long time so interested in the task that, before he wearied of it, Helena had become a tolerable scholar in even the more difficult of those languages. "I have found my vocation at last, Helena," he said laughingly to his daughter. "I was evidently intended to be a schoolmaster to little girls. How I should have hated them, though, if they had been stupid, and not bright like you, my bonnie lassie!"

Another bond between the two was their mutual love for music. Cameron knew music theoretically, and was as good a critic as could be easily found; but he was deficient in the

technical faculty: he played no instrument, and he had early lost his good baritone voice.

Helena, however, both played and sang, and when they happened to possess a local habitation for a few months, a piano was its first and most indispensable article of furniture. But Helena's education was not all ornamental. She learned history too, in the easiest and most delightful manner, in the spots where its wonderful events had transpired; amid the tangible records which have been preserved for us, and which render the past real and vivid to a degree which those who have never left America can hardly comprehend; and wandering hither and thither from north to south, from east to west, she knew Europe thoroughly.

In their errant Bohemian life they were naturally much alone; but too much solitude and dependence on themselves were narrowing, Daniel said, and every once in a while they must take a plunge into society. He chose their acquaintances, less with regard to their morality or officially accredited social position than to their breeding and culture, and Helena was introduced into some circles and imbibed

some ideas at which her Puritan ancestors would have turned over in their graves with horror, could they have known with what companions their degenerate descendants associated. But, on the other hand, she saw many brilliant men and women, and felt the vivifying influence of strong minds of various nationalities ; and there was nothing Cameron hated so uncompromisingly as vulgarity ; from that at least she was preserved. In all the years of her girlhood with her father, only one cloud ever obscured their horizon, and that was the insufficiency of the almighty dollar. Between the periods of his father's and mother's death Daniel had pretty well consumed capital as well as interest, the share left him by his father's will ; and, when Mrs. Cameron died, the estate, which had suffered from the want of a man to manage it, was found to have decreased in value, and less was left to be divided between Daniel and Prudence than had been hoped and expected.

Daniel took his portion as much as possible in stocks and shares — anything most convertible into ready money, and Prudence was left

with the old house and the lands about it, which, valued as one half the property, really yielded a much smaller income than Daniel's share. But she was used to sacrificing herself, as we already know, and only too willing to avoid any further cause of contention with her brother. Besides, she hoped that it was only giving to Helena at once what would ultimately have become hers.

A piece of real estate awarded to Daniel he sold at a sacrifice in order to be enabled to leave America more quickly; and, with the proceeds of the sale in his pocket, had felt in quite a flourishing condition when he first took Helena to live with him. However, he did not reinvest, but, with a sort of childish pleasure in actual money which had always been one of his great weaknesses, kept on spending and spending till there was little left to spend; so that while, in the beginning of her life with her father, everything had been done on so sumptuous a scale that Helena had supposed him to be a very rich man, the time came when she discovered her mistake.

Old Mr. Cameron, who knew his son well

enough to foresee, in a measure, the future state of affairs, had left a certain sum to Helena, the interest of which was to be expended on her education, and with which her expenses had, in fact, been paid until Daniel took her away from school. This sum Daniel could not touch, nor could Helena herself have control over the principal until she reached twenty-five years of age. The interest of this they could depend on; but what had been ample for the expenses of one young girl was a poor pittance for two persons of Daniel's and Helena's tastes, and one quarter's money was always gone long before the next was due. Cameron almost never worked now, but he got into debt in half the cities of Europe. He speculated, or his friends did for him, with various degrees of success and ill-luck, and he at last undertook to mend his decrepit fortunes at the gaming-tables, of which, before the Prussian rule, there were so many in the north of Europe. For a time he was ashamed to tell Helena that he played; but there was too much *camaraderie* between them for him to conceal anything from her long.

When Helena knew it, she wanted to try for herself; and she won, as they say beginners always do, the Devil taking particular delight in baiting well the hook with which to catch the weak and unwary. Four thousand francs Helena threw into her father's lap one evening when he had missed her for some time, and was sitting languidly wondering how he could extricate himself from the tight place in which he happened to be, everything seeming to go against him just then, — pouring down upon him a shower of gold.

Cameron kissed the girl's flushed cheeks and her little hot hands, and they went out together and ordered supper. The next morning they paid their hotel-bill and started on a journey they had contemplated and been on the point of abandoning. But Helena was never so fortunate again, and Cameron never became a confirmed gambler, whose passion for the vice *per se* is so great that he cannot leave the tables. He played soberly and to win, and when the luck was against him stopped and got on as best he could till there came some new turn in the wheel of fortune. And, after

all, this uncertain life, though at times irksome, had its advantages in Helena's eyes. There was an excitement about it, a constant demand upon one's wit and activity which she would have missed in a more regulated existence. Then, as Cameron said, in Europe you can live like nabobs, or you can live on nothing a year; so when they were in funds they lived like nabobs, and when the stocking was empty they went into all sorts of queer little country places, where board and lodging were to be had for a song, travelling thither in third-class railway carriages, country wagons, and cheap diligences, and getting many a glimpse into the life of the people of the different nations, such as most foreigners never obtain. It was at these times that Cameron devoted himself most assiduously to his daughter's education, and Helena was not sure that she did not prefer these periods of her existence to the more opulent ones.

Of course father and daughter could not travel so constantly from one end of Europe to the other without becoming known in many cities and watering-places, and without meeting

with many persons who were struck with the beauty of the latter. To many foreigners even the small portion to which they discovered that Helena could lay claim seemed a respectable dowry, and numerous were the offers of marriage which Cameron received for her from this class. Then there were some eccentric Englishmen and some brave-hearted young Americans willing to take her with nothing at all; the former because they had enough for both, and were inflamed by her grace and beauty; the latter because they were madly in love with their charming countrywoman, and felt that to toil for her, in the sweat of their brows, from morn till eve, would be their happiest lot.

But they were one and all refused. Cameron was in no hurry to part with his daughter. He had determined that, when he was forced to do so, it should be by reason of some exceptionally brilliant marriage from which solid advantages would accrue to both herself and him. Helena felt no special inclination towards matrimony, thought young men insipid, and was too well aware of the guile of older ones to wish to

trust herself to their mercies, and she loved her father with an affection so intense and absorbing that the thought of separation from him was agony. But finally, at a time when the glory of the Second Empire was at its height, they happened to be spending a winter in Paris, and were participating to a considerable extent in those fêtes and gayeties with which the iniquitous government strove to satisfy the insatiable appetite for pleasure of its satellites, and to stifle the people's discontent. Here a former acquaintance of Cameron's, with whom he had lately formed a closer intimacy, was of much service to them, causing them to be presented at the Tuileries, and procuring them invitations to several imperial entertainments. This man, whose name was Raimond, of low origin, clever and unscrupulous, had acquired a prominent position in his native province, having been one of the first to uphold Louis Napoleon and the *coup d'état*, and lending all his influence to the imperial party in the ensuing elections. He had been rewarded, as such men often were, by the confidence of Napoleon III., a position

under government, and the title of baron ; and he had grown very rich, like so many of his fellows.

Raimond often came to the apartment which the Camerons had hired in the newer quarter of Paris. He was always ready to lend money to Cameron, or do him any service whatever. He entertained them with the current Parisian gossip, or had long conversations with him on the state of France and its future possibilities. He believed firmly in the Empire and its continuance.

To Helena he showed an almost exaggerated deference and respect, mingled with a sort of subdued admiration ; but she never thought of him as a suitor, although likely enough her father did. However that may have been, Cameron appeared one day before his daughter with rather a serious face.

“ I have something important to say to you, child,” he began.

“ I hope it is no more money trouble, Dan,” she answered. When they were alone she often returned to the familiar address of her babyhood, and it always pleased and amused her father.

“No,” he said, “we are getting on famously just now, you know; besides, whenever there is anything wrong Raimond is ready to put it right for me. He’s not a bad fellow, Raimond, eh, Helena?”

“No, he does not seem to be,” said Helena carelessly.

“Well, then,” said Cameron, taking his subject at a plunge, “he wants to marry you.”

“Marry *me!*” the girl cried.

“There is nothing very wonderful about that,” continued her father; “plenty of others have wanted to before him, and if you had any vanity in your composition you would have seen it long ago; but you are just like your mother about that: she never could be made vain, and no more can you. Have you any objection to Raimond, my little Helena?”

“N—no,” said Helena, hesitatingly, “I don’t know that I have. I don’t care anything about him.”

“No, I don’t suppose you do, but I don’t suppose either that you ever particularly expected to marry for love. It is a common American practice, I know; but you are really more

European than American, and you have had experience enough to know that people marry for a great many other things than love every day. Besides, it is an open question whether love matches are the happiest after all. *I* very much doubt it, and if it comes to the question of affection, I flatter myself that my little Helena will never care for anybody quite as much as for her old father."

Cameron's voice trembled a little as he spoke these words. Helena rose from her seat, went to her father's side and, putting her arms round him, kissed his blonde moustache. For a moment the two remained embraced; then Cameron put his daughter gently away.

"Let us look at the pros and cons of it, my love," he said, taking her hand in his when she had drawn her chair to his side, and marking his points with his forefinger upon her rosy palm. "In the first place, he cancels my debts to him,—and they have reached a pretty large figure, my child, if the truth must be told; in the second place, instead of requiring anything with you, as most of these foreign fellows do, he settles on you a handsome sum which neither

he nor any one else can ever touch, from now to the time of kingdom come. And he does these things because he has never seen any one ‘*si belle, si ravissante,*’ in a word, any one so fitted to carry out certain shrewd ideas he entertains, as my little girl. He is not wildly in love with you, Helena. So much the better, I think for obvious reasons, but he admires you immensely and has a respect for you, with which, he says, and I believe him, no other woman has ever inspired him. He is on the point of buying a great *hôtel* in the Champs Elysées, and he wants a brilliant woman as its mistress. He is an intensely ambitious man ; his political position he has been able to form for himself, his social position a woman must help form for him. He sees some of his comrades going ahead of him in this respect, and it annoys him beyond measure. It is a weak point, you think ? Yes, so much the better. A man must have his weak points to be easily managed ; if I had not had mine, your sway would have been more difficult to maintain, my dear. In the contract which will be formed between you, that is, of course, if you accept

him, he will bring you wealth and the opportunity of a position; you will bring him beauty, accomplishments, and *savoir-faire* to aid him to attain the position he desires. It is a mutual thing — a matter of give and take. One strong point in his favor with me is that he would have no wish to separate us. I should have my apartment in your *hôtel*, my seat at your table, to come or go as I liked; but you may be sure it would be mostly to come. I might find a son-in-law who would not want me in the way; I might be forced to leave you, dear, for the sake of domestic peace; or it might be some one who would whisk you away to some situation where there was no room for me; some servant of a barbarous land, our own country, for instance, or one of the half-civilized Northern nations. With Raimond there is no danger of either of these misfortunes. We like each other and he prefers my presence; all his interests bind him to France, to Paris itself. The very fact that he does not pretend to love you wildly is a guaranty that he will not prove an exacting or unreasonable husband. And there is another reason, my Helena, which for some

months past has made me desirous of seeing you in a position where your future would be assured. I don't feel strong, and I am pretty sure that the machine cannot hold out much longer. For myself, I dare not complain. In these fifty years of mine I have lived the lives of many men ; all earth holds I have tasted and enjoyed, and it is, perhaps, but fair that I should go to make room for others ; but I cannot bear to think of you, my precious child, left with no one to turn to for support, either alone here or in that deserted village with your Aunt Prudence, the only near relative you possess."

Cameron's clasp tightened about his daughter's fingers, and she stooped to kiss her father's hand.

"Now, all these things," continued Cameron cheerfully, "are in Raimond's favor, and there is not much against him — for I don't count, nor suppose you would, that he is only a few years younger than I."

Helena shook her head.

"His disqualifications are that he is a *parvenu*, and I confess to the weakness of having

desired that my daughter should bear an ancient and honorable name ; but his people were respectable enough, though only poor tillers of the soil. Of course, I set no value on his mushroom title. I should have liked to see a real coronet on your cards, Helena, but we are, or ought to be, republicans, and should not let that influence us too much. His other defect is his being hand and glove with those rascally Bonapartes ; but they hold the winning cards now, and he thinks are going to keep them. I have a little of the sentiment of *à la guerre, comme à la guerre* ; we cannot afford to be too fastidious. Now, how does it strike you ? ”

“ I will leave it to you, papa,” said Helena.

“ No, no,” said Cameron, “ you shall do no such thing. You know that, on the whole, I should be glad to see this affair settled in Raymond’s favor ; but I have no desire to force your inclination. I only wish for your happiness ” (“ and my own ease,” he might have added), “ and if you have any objection to becoming the wife of a French *parvenu*, you

have only to say so, and perhaps next time it will be an English lord more worth the taking. All I ask of you, Helena, is to give the matter your consideration before making your final decision."

He rose to leave her, but Helena detained him with her hand.

"Don't go away, Dan," she said; "if I should think for a month, I could not say anything to myself which you have not told me and that I do not know. It is natural I should hesitate a moment about marrying a man I know so little and never regarded as a possible husband, but I think you are right and that it is the best thing I can do. You may tell Mr. Raimond that I accept him."

"You are sure you will not change, nor regret deciding so hastily?" asked Cameron, a little anxiously, now that the die seemed cast.

"No, no, Dan," answered Helena, "don't be afraid; it will be all right."

"All the gods bless you then, my daughter," returned her father, folding her in his arms, after which they went to walk and talked of other things.

When Raimond next appeared before Helena it was as her accepted suitor. He brought a magnificent diamond ring (which he placed upon her finger ; he concluded the purchase of the *hôtel* in the Champs Elysées), and six weeks after the day of their betrothal they were married. They spent some months in travel, Cameron joining them after a short time, and then they all returned together to their Paris residence. Raimond was daily more and more satisfied with the choice he had made ; Helena became the rage, and her *salon* one of the most crowded among the fashionable circles of the Empire. Her sayings were quoted from one end of Paris (her Paris) to the other, and rumor credited her with a score of lovers among the throngs who paid respectful homage before her throne. Cameron went away sometimes during the first part of his daughter's married life, but it was even wearier work than he had supposed to wander alone, and he enjoyed her triumphs too well to wish to absent himself long from the scene of them : therefore he lived mostly in his corner of the vast establishment, and, in the most pressing moments of her crowded life,

Helena never forgot to care for her father's comfort and happiness, as in the days when they had been all in all to each other, as indeed, in spirit they were still. Raimond proved himself a model husband, never interfering with his wife's employments or predilections, or being jealous of her friends; but giving her *carte blanche* in every direction, and Cameron often congratulated himself upon the possession of such a son-in-law.

Everything went smoothly and delightfully until a weakness came upon Cameron, confining him to his room and preventing him from noticing a certain indefinable change which became visible in Raimond about the time when Cameron's illness commenced. The fêtes became fewer in the hôtel Raimond, for Helena was obliged to attend her father almost constantly. Some persons who knew Raimond intimately said it was just as well that expenses should be curtailed, for he had lost heavily on the Bourse, and could never meet certain liabilities which he had incurred. He *did* meet them, however, to the surprise of his friends and creditors. Just then Cameron died — in Helena's arms, in-

flicting upon her the deepest sorrow she had ever known. Shortly after this there was a violent scene between Raimond and his wife, of which Helena in all her life never spoke to anyone.

A little later the physician declared a complete change and a sea-voyage necessary to the re-establishment of Mme. Raimond's health, after the severe shock it had sustained in consequence of her father's death; and Helena, Raimond assenting gloomily, went to America to visit her Aunt Prudence, who had often urged her to come. She crossed in the spring, and had been about three months in the quiet country dwelling with her aunt, when two woful pieces of news reached her,—one that war had been declared between France and Germany; the other that Raimond had committed forgery, and, escaping almost out of the very hands of the officers sent to arrest him, had fled no one knew whither. From something he had let fall at the moment of conviction it was charitably supposed and announced that his wife had refused to redeem his honor by the sacrifice of the fortune settled upon her. Some more practical and less delicate spirits

hardly blamed her, but the high-minded and the envious, of which there were a large number, considered her almost as a participator in her husband's crime. It was a hard accusation to bear, and the truth was simply this. When the altercation above alluded to took place between Raimond and Helena, the former had entreated, almost demanded, the restitution of the sum he had formerly given her, promising to return it at some future period, but not giving any reasonable grounds for his demands; for he could not bring himself to confess his crime to his wife, the person whom he esteemed and respected most in the world, and whose censure he most dreaded. Helena, naturally enough, believed that he had hardly waited for her father's body to grow cold to unmask his true character and attempt to despoil her for purposes of his own which she could not divine, there never having been any real confidence between them, and indignantly refused compliance with his requests.

In spite of Prudence's entreaties, she now hastily returned to Europe, and, not being able to go to Paris during the long months of fam-

ine, siege, and the commune, she settled herself in Geneva to await the end, and entered the capital shortly after the Versaillist army, to regulate her affairs. She found herself worse off than she expected: the fortune which Raimond had accumulated so easily in the early days of the Empire was destined, like plants with insufficient roots, to bear but short-lived flowers. The sum for which she had sold herself to him had dwindled so much as to be insufficient to cover the amount he had forged, even if she had been inclined to pay it and reduce herself to beggary; for the money inherited from her grandfather she had made over to her father on her twenty-fifth birthday. The Champs Elysées *hôtel*, to which she could lay no claim, had been seized by Raimond's creditors; and when she had collected all she possessed, she found herself almost as poor as she had ever been in her life. But her courage was not broken: she was only hardened, not crushed, by what seemed to her such an accumulation of undeserved misfortune. "I have lived by my wits before;" she said, "I can live by them again;" and she left Paris, to which she had

never returned up to the time of the beginning of our story. She had been in St. Petersburg and in the Italian capitals, making, wherever she went, what the Italians call a *buona figura*. She never travelled without a maid, was always elegantly though simply dressed, lived in the best hotels, or in some pretty little apartment in the fashionable quarter of the city where she happened to be. A good deal of scandal followed her, of course. Some said she had a Russian prince in her train, who paid her bills and supported her establishments; others said, No, it was an English nobleman. Some concocted one story and some another to account for her movements and way of life; but no one really *knew* anything to her discredit. Some women get themselves into a vast deal of trouble by confiding nine tenths of their histories to their acquaintances, and then are immensely astonished when the world discovers the other fraction. Helena was uncommunicative, and no one could say that she had ever been detected in an act or word unbecoming a lady. Still, there was a prejudice against her, partly on account of the stain on her husband's honor, for

Raimond's story was pretty generally known; partly because, being still young and exceptionally beautiful, she was always alone; and partly because her father had borne a reputation for extravagance and eccentricity, and her wandering life with him was not calculated to inspire confidence. Many vague reports concerning her had floated across the water, and although they had not reached her aunt's ears, in her quiet village, and because a person's family is often the last to learn anything to his detriment, yet they were pretty widely circulated, and in this way Mrs. Wyndham had come to hear of her. When, after a brilliant reign during the winter months in the greatest of Italian cities, she suddenly disappeared at the commencement of the spring without taking leave of her friends, the tongues wagged faster than ever. Some said she had fled from the Russian prince or the English nobleman; some that she had gone to avoid the scandal sure to ensue when a certain impending duel took place, she being implicated in the quarrel. When it became known, as of course it did, that, instead of flying to hide from something or somebody,

in some undiscoverable country, she was only staying at Sorrento, people said that she had been seen first at Monaco, where she had played high and lost so much that she had been obliged to seek some quiet retreat in which to economize. Then, having finally settled the matter to their satisfaction, they let her alone for a time, and talked about somebody else. If Helena had told any one the real reason why she was at Sorrento, she would have simply said that the winter campaign had been more than usually exhausting; that she had deserted when she could endure it no longer, and, like Sir Charles Pomander in "Peg Woffington," had come among the quiet surroundings and sweet freshness of the country to gather new strength to enter the thick of the fight again.

Such was the woman, brilliant, fascinating, but of a doubtful reputation and uncertain principles, whom the simple American travellers, the Wyndhams and Harold Hart, had, by a caprice of fortune, been led to Sorrento to meet.

CHAPTER IV.

A SORRENTO EVENING.

“MAMMA,” said Emily, a few days later, “there is no use in telling me not to be intimate with Mrs. Raimond. I think her the most fascinating person I ever met; certainly much nicer than any one else we have seen since we came abroad; and she is inclined to be very kind to us, and she knows—everything. It would be of the greatest advantage to me if I could be friends with her comfortably. What do you suppose she has just proposed?”

“I am sure I don’t know,” her mother answered. “I wish she would let you alone.”

“Well, I don’t,” retorted Emily. “She has offered to give me Italian lessons.”

“I hope you refused,” said Mrs. Wyndham.

“Indeed I did not, mamma; that would have been very rude. I said she was very good, but that I disliked giving her so much trouble; and she said it would be a pleasure, as she had very little to do, and was tired of being so idle. Then she delivered an interesting little lecture to me on Italian pronunciation; and she gave me a short poem to learn by heart, and I am to recite it to her to-morrow.”

“She seems to have got you pretty well into her net,” Mrs. Wyndham remarked; “but you always did have your own way, and I suppose you mean to keep on having it. However, I shall turn over a new leaf if I find you seeing too much of her.”

“I think,” continued her daughter, disregarding her mother’s threat, which she well knew was harmless — how often had that leaf been about to be turned over, but the book still remained open at the same old page! — “I think her husband is dead.”

“What makes you?” asked her mother, with quick curiosity.

“Because when I went in, Josephine was talking to her, and she said: ‘*Depuis que madame a perdu monsieur, son mari,*’ ‘Since madame lost her husband,’ so she must be a widow.”

“Why does n’t she wear mourning, then?” demanded the old lady.

“All widows do not,” said Emily, “and he may have been dead a long time. Besides, she does almost always wear white and lavender, and that is a sort of half-mourning.

“I saw her the other day with a blue bow on,” said Mrs. Wyndham. “No, no, I don’t feel at all certain that the man has come to a lawful end.”

“Well, at least,” persisted her daughter, abandoning this point, “in this week you have not discovered anything about her unworthy the greatest lady in the land, have you?”

“No; I’m willing to admit that.”

“And you know how hard the world is, what wrong motives it imputes to people, and what false constructions it puts upon their actions,” continued the youthful orator, waxing warm. “You have heard things against

her father, but he could not have been a bad man and have made her love him so. Think with what respect and tenderness she speaks of him. You did not use to like to hear mean things, and I have heard you defend people many a time when others were abusing them, and I don't see why you should have conceived such a prejudice against Mrs. Raimond."

"There, there," said Mrs. Wyndham, "I'm sure I don't want to be too severe."

"And you *said*," urged the wily girl, "that you did not want to be impolite, but it *is* impolite never to go near her when she asks you. She wants us to come to her rooms to-night and hear that pretty Miss Lister play? May I tell her we will come, mamma?"

"O! that is it!" exclaimed her mother. "Well, well, tell her what you please. Perhaps I *have* been too hasty, and at any rate it can do no harm to be civil now and then. Now, my dear, I hope you are satisfied."

"Will not you and your young people come to my room with me now?" asked Madame Raimond, at the close of dinner. "I expect some more people later, but you have not seen

my apartment yet; I should like to show it to you."

Mrs. Wyndham assented, and Helena preceded her up a flight of stairs, and down a corridor, at the end of which she threw open a door, inviting her guests to enter.

"This is my *salon*," she said.

Some Persian rugs were spread upon the tile-paved floor, and across one corner of the room stood a grand piano. There were two or three armchairs and a sofa, evidently hotel property, and two steamer-chairs like those which encumber the deck of every passenger vessel that crosses the Atlantic. All the furniture was covered with Sorrento silk blankets, or bright-colored afghans such as are sold by the Basques in the Pyrenees, on the borders of France and Spain. Velvet cushions and *pouffs* were scattered about the room. Half a dozen unmounted photographs and some pencil and water-color sketches were pinned upon the walls. On the table, amid a litter of writing and drawing materials, stood a terracotta copy of the Narcissus and the Dancing Faun of the Naples Museum, and a great bunch

of wild-flowers in one of the odd-shaped crockery jars in which wine is served at the *osterie* or wine-shops about Naples. An *étagère* in one corner was loaded with books, and on a small round table in the middle of the room a lamp was burning, surrounded by several delicate porcelain coffee-cups, a silver sugar-basin, and a pile of tiny, gold-bowled spoons.

“This is a nice room!” exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham; “do you have it all to yourself?”

“Yes,” replied her hostess; “and here,” with a waive of her hand, “is a small room for my maid; my own sleeping-room opens out of this. I have known this place for years, for I happened to come here once with my father, so I wrote for this apartment, and had a trunkful of things sent down from Rome. I don’t mind roughing it for a time; but when I am to be in a place so many months, I confess I like a little comfort. I should have to pay a fortune for such accommodations at the *Victoria* or the *Tramontana*; but these people are moderate in their demands, and civil and obliging.”

“This is the first grand piano I have seen since I left home,” said Emily. “Did you have that sent from Rome also?”

“No, the grandduchess of B——, whom I know slightly, hired a villa here for the winter, and on leaving Sorrento a fortnight ago she bequeathed her piano to me.”

Mrs. Wyndham opened her eyes very wide. Mme. Raimond had mentioned the near relative of a reigning house.

“Let us come outside,” Helena continued, “I want to show you my beautiful view.”

She led them out upon a large terrace scantily covered with grape-vines, which, planted in huge flower-pots placed at intervals along the parapet, were so trained that through leafy frames you looked out over the magnificent sea-picture that lay beyond.

The hotel Cocumella, unlike most of the Sorrento hotels, is not built upon the cliffs overhanging the sea. It stands at some little distance from the shore, and from its walls olive and orange groves and vineyards slope downwards towards the water.

It was the clearest possible night. The

heavens, more thickly studded with stars than the northern sky ever appears to be, seemed to droop towards the earth as if overburdened with their weight, or as if yearning to reach and embrace the placid floods.

“There is Ischia,” said Mme. Raimond, pointing to a large island to the left. “We cannot see Capri: it is hidden by the point. Next is Procida; and on the other side, in the curve of the bay, and farther along, at the foot of Vesuvius, are Torre Annunziata, Torre del Greco, and Portici where the dumb girl lived. That long line of lights almost opposite us is Naples.”

“O! how beautiful it is!” sighed Emily in ecstasy.

“I suppose no one goes to Ischia since the terrible earthquake,” remarked Harold.

“I fancy not. Besides the horror and the loss of life, the devastation of Ischia is to be regretted on account of the mineral waters. Casamicciola might, in time, have rivalled the most famous French or German springs.”

“Mesdames Lister and Monsieur le Capi-

taine," announced Josephine, appearing at the window.

"Bring out some chairs, Josephine," said her mistress, after greeting the new-comers. "Unless these ladies are afraid of taking cold, we will take our coffee here."

The ladies were not afraid: the chairs were brought and the coffee served, the party being increased meanwhile by the arrival of two young Italians who also spoke a little English. Most foreigners with a slight knowledge of our language court our society for the sake of the benefit of practising the English tongue, and these young men were delighted with the prospect of being able to combine an English lesson with a little harmless flirtation with two or three pretty "*mees*," as they persistently call English-speaking girls.

"How quiet Vesuvius is," remarked Mrs. Lister, accepting a fragrant cup of coffee.

"It looks so innocent, one would never suppose it capable of doing any mischief."

"What a mystery it is!" said Harold. "I think I could never divest myself of a certain awe about it."

“Nor I,” said Maud Lister, “I cannot imagine how people can go on living under it with the knowledge that their turn may come to be overwhelmed and buried.”

“We Italians are not like you. We take no thought for the morrow, do you not say?” said one of the young men.

“That is only true of you southern Italians,” said their hostess; “the rest of the nation has forethought and prudence enough.”

“How I should like to see an eruption!” exclaimed Emily.

“I was in Naples during the last one,” said Helena. “Everybody rushed down from Rome, and I with the rest. But it was an awful sight. Lurid flames rising half the height of the mountain into the air, showers of stones and great pieces of rock hurled from the crater, and streams of burning lava pouring down the side. And with this,—darkness. The sun was obscured for several days, a thick, black cloud rested upon everything, and there was a constant succession of terrible reports like thunder. It seemed as if the day

of wrath had come. Then when the force of the eruption was spent, for three days there was a continual rain of fine cinders. One could not stir out-of-doors without an umbrella. We drove one day to where the lava stream had buried the village of San Sebastiano, and the latter part of the way the carriage sank to the hubs of the wheels in the ashes. The horses could not move, and we were obliged to get out and walk. I never felt such heat; it was like walking into a fiery furnace; the perspiration streamed down our faces. When we reached home we were as sooty as chimney-sweeps."

"It sounds horrible," said Mrs. Wyndham, who had listened with great interest. "I am sure I should not like to see it at all."

"Vesuvius is uncanny," said Mrs. Lister, "and so is most of this country, for that matter. You can never tell what is going to happen next."

"A great portion of the soil is of volcanic formation; we are more or less liable to earthquakes, I suppose," said Helena.

"Yes, Ischia," eagerly interposed the It

who was least proficient in English. "Great pity, very beautiful place."

"Parts of the island were covered with yellow broom when I was there, and were, as you say, very beautiful," replied Helena, "but it was not a very inviting spot for mere tourists. The people were unused to strangers, and rough and uncivilized. In one of the more remote towns our carriage was surrounded by fifty-seven boys and girls, all screaming and begging together."

"O, I am glad I have not got to go there!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham.

"You shall stay here some time, signorina?" asked the adventurous Italian of Emily. "Sorrento very beautiful. You and your signora mamma must take the walks on donkeys here."

"Walks on donkeys are hardly the thing for me," observed Mrs. Wyndham dryly. "Tell him my experience, Emily."

"Why," said Emily, laughing, "mamma thought she would go with us to Camaldoli the other day, but when the donkey was brought she could not get into the saddle,—at least,

not comfortably ; and the donkey-driver said to her, ‘ *Signora, voi siete troppo colossale per entrare.*’ Even I could understand that.”

“ *Signora Baronessa,*” began the little captain, with a directness peculiar to the majority of Italians, “ you invited us to hear some music. Are we not to have it ? ”

“ Certainly, if the others are ready. Yes, they all seem to have finished their coffee. I will just see that the lamps are arranged properly.”

She entered the house, followed by the Wyndhams, the captain, and Harold ; the others remaining behind to continue an animated conversation in broken English and Italian.

“ Would you allow me to look at your books ? ” asked Emily, with a longing glance towards the bookshelves.

“ Certainly, and to read them too, if you like,” her hostess answered.

They were in half a dozen languages. Among them were a Homer in the original, a Horace, and a Latin Testament. Most of them were bound in “ Roman ” binding, white parch-

ment with red-edged leaves, which is so pretty and cheap in Italy. Many of them were worn with use.

“Can you read all these?” asked Emily, glancing at the titles with awe and admiration.

“I like to have them near me,” was the evasive reply.

“The signora baronessa can read everything,” interposed the captain. “She could fill a *cattedra* in any university in my country.”

“And you know Russian too, I am sure,” continued the young girl, “for I saw you smile at something those Russians said at dinner.”

“Why, I thought nobody knew Russian except the Russians themselves, and they not always,” said Mrs. Wyndham.

“I have been some time in St. Petersburg. Besides, when one has the habit of learning languages, new ones are easily acquired. Then you know, Mrs. Wyndham, Americans are quick to catch anything that pleases their fancy.”

“We rank next to the Russians as linguists, do we not?” asked Harold.

“Hardly; the Scandinavians hold the second place; but I think we come after them.”

“O, Harold,” cried Emily, who had left the books and was moving about the room; “do come and look at these sketches. I don’t know this pretty view, but this other is the sweep of the bay and Vesuvius. Isn’t it nice?”

Harold went to Emily’s side, and spoke a few words of sincere but discriminating praise.

“O, those little things are not worth the attention of an artist like you, Mr. Hart,” said Mme. Raimond, joining the young people.

“I am only a portrait painter,” returned Harold, rather abruptly.

“How can you say ‘only’ after seeing the portraits of the old masters, and knowing what some of the moderns are making of them? Mrs. Wyndham has told me that you had a picture in the *Salon* last year. I congratulate you. Do you draw too, Miss Wyndham?”

“No, I have no accomplishments.”

“Perhaps that is the best accomplishment you could have in these days when every woman feels it incumbent upon herself to be distin-

guished, as it were, by some especial brand or label."

"That is all very well for you to say, who seems to do everything," said the young girl in a reproachful tone.

"Did you never hear of the cross of pearls which was attached to the iron chain?" returned the other, smiling. "Besides, my dear, you know that they who dabble in many things rarely do anything well."

"I don't see how you can say that in the country of Leonardo and Michel Angelo," exclaimed Emily.

"Ay, there's the rub," replied Mme. Raymond. "The great exceptions do but prove the rule for the rest of us. But the lamps are ready, and the captain is very impatient for his music."

She turned to the captain and made him a speech in Italian, to which he replied with a series of bows and many protestations in his hoarse voice. Then going to the window she summoned the others.

They responded immediately; and as soon as they were seated in the *salon*, Maud Lister

played, to Mme. Raimond's accompaniment, the Raff Cavatina, bringing out the passionate measures with great force and beauty for such a youthful amateur.

When she had finished, the Italians broke into enthusiastic applause, and Mme. Raimond uttered warm words of praise.

"No one could help playing well with you, Mrs. Raimond," the girl replied; "it is a perfect inspiration. But I do not know anything else properly," she continued, as Helena urged her to play again. "Now, you must please play to me. You know we are going away to-morrow, and I shall have no opportunity of hearing you again."

Helena played — first some short pieces of Grieg, then selections from Schumann and Wagner: that subtle, subjective music on which this generation has been so nurtured that it seems interwoven with our beings and to express — with its doubts, questionings, glimpses of rarest beauty and its restless, unsatisfied longings — the mental conditions under which we live.

It was above the comprehension of half the

audience. Mrs. Wyndham indulged in a series of quiet naps, in her corner of the sofa, waking up now and then to say, "How pretty!" or make some other equally appropriate remark; and the Italians clapped their hands languidly at every pause. But the young Americans listened with intense enjoyment and almost breathless silence.

"I think that will do," said Mme. Raimond at last, rising from the piano.

"We thank you very much, signora," said one of the young Italians; "but now that you have given us music for the head, will you not give us some music for the heart?"

"Yes," assented the other, eagerly; "perhaps an air from 'Lucia' or something from our great master, Verdi. To tell the truth, we do not understand the barbarous German music."

Unfortunately neither Mme. Raimond nor Maud Lister had "Lucia" or any light operatic airs at their fingers' ends.

"We might play some *Volkslieder* or some American tunes, Maud," suggested Gretchen Lister; "we can play those without notes. Perhaps those would please them."

“That is an excellent idea,” said Mme. Raymond.

Gretchen Lister seated herself at the piano, and the sisters launched into the “Old Folks at Home,” which they followed with various other German and American melodies, eliciting the mitigated approval of the Italians, who would have preferred something gayer and noisier, and who implored the young ladies not to waste their exceptional talents on anything less beautiful than the works of the great Italian masters, Verdi, Rossini, etc.

The musical discussion was not concluded when Mrs. Lister rose to take leave.

“We must be off early,” she said. “You know we are to drive to Castellammare in the morning, to the Naples train, in order to get on to Rome in the afternoon.”

“I almost envy you,” said their hostess. “I never hear that any one is going to Rome without wanting to go too. But in Italy one would always like to be in two or three places at once.”

“They are making Rome so beautiful now,” said the Italian who knew the least English ;

“such broad new streets, such fine houses — very beautiful.”

“Why, do you think so? I think they are spoiling it,” replied Mrs. Lister, “tearing down all the mediæval part, putting up such quantities of ugly buildings, like so many barracks to look at, cutting the Villa Ludovisi into house-lots and streets, and ruining the views in every direction.”

“Well, it is bad enough from a picturesque point of view,” said Mme. Raimond; “but I think we foreigners assume a very egotistic attitude towards the doings of the Italians. I think we ought to be willing to concede something to the exigencies of a modern capital. Besides, they are paying great attention to the preservation of the antiquities, and while those and the pictures and statues and the Roman sky are left us, Rome will still be in a measure Rome.”

“The best use they could make of their antiquities and museums and all the rest of it would be to sell them to the English,” declared the captain.

A chorus of disapprobation greeted this speech.

“Why, you surely would not wish to deprive your chief city of all its characteristic charm?” asked Helena.

“In the first place, signora, Rome ought not to have anything to do with Italy. The Italians should have left it to the Pope and have kept Florence for their capital. Then we could have started afresh,— a new country with a new future.”

“And have given up your past with all its great associations and the prestige of Roman glory?” cried Helena.

Our past is only a clog, — a weight upon us. We do not want to be trammelled any longer by the old traditions. What we desire is a free field and an opportunity to become a great, practical, modern nation, like the country of these ladies.”

The ladies protested again, while the other two Italians fell upon him with all the violent volubility of which the Italian tongue is capable.

“Oh! I see, I have drawn down an avalanche upon myself,” said the captain, laughing. “*Signora Baronessa, io scappo.*” And

immediately becoming very grave again, he drew his heels together, made a solemn comprehensive bow and left the room.

“Well! of all the extraordinary creatures!” exclaimed Mrs. Lister. “But now we must really bid you good-bye. We have enjoyed the evening so much.”

“Yes, it has been delightful,” exclaimed the sisters, in chorus.

“I am very sorry to part with you,” Helena answered. “There will be a general exodus soon, I suppose, and I shall be left all alone, unless Mrs. Wyndham is compassionate and remains with me.”

Mrs. Lister and her daughters withdrew, accompanied by the two Italians, who were still volubly demonstrating to the young ladies how their country might achieve a great practical future without any renunciation of her traditions.

“Do not go yet, Mrs. Wyndham,” said Helena, as Mrs. Wyndham was about to follow the others. “It is very early, and you have no train to catch to-morrow morning.”

Emily gave her mother an appealing look.

“If we stay a few minutes longer, will you sing to us a little, Mrs. Raimond?” she asked. “I ought to be contented with what I have had, but it is just the night for music. I should be so grateful if you would sing.”

“I will sing with pleasure,” replied Helena, reseating herself at the piano.

Her voice was a very low contralto, very rich and sweet. Her performance was something between chanting and singing, and the first effect was so unusual that pleasure was lost in astonishment. Soon, however, astonishment deepened into admiration, and her audience became fascinated, entranced by her monotonous melodies and the intensity of expression she threw into them. She sang only tender or pathetic verses: “Come not when I am dead” and “Ask me no more;” Matthew Arnold’s beautiful lines, “Strew on her roses, roses,” and Mr. Browning’s exquisite song, “You’ll love me yet, and I can tarry; your love’s protracted growing.”

“I never heard any of those songs before,” said Mrs. Wyndham, who was listening, all

attention, with the tears streaming down her cheeks. "What are they, ma'am?"

"Pickings and stealings," Helena answered. "I fear the great composers would turn in their graves, could they know to what a use I have put some of their *motifs* and certain scraps of melody that are woven into their works."

"No, I think they would thank you for employing them so beautifully," said Emily; "do, please, keep on."

"I will sing you a little Italian song," said Helena; "Miss Emily knows what it means, for I translated it to her this morning." And she sang this sweetest of the people's songs, in music of her own, as sad and delicate as itself:

*Oh! quanto melanconico
E d' Espero il fulgor,
Quando scintilla languido
Tra il giorno che si muor!*

*Le nuvoletti simili
A impallidite fior,
Sembra che un serto intrecciano
Al giorno che si muor.*

*Del cuore umano i gemiti,
Ma le sue gioie ancor,
Al mutò avello scendono
Col giorno che si muor.*

[TRANSLATION.]

Oh! how melancholy
Of Hesper is the ray,
When it sparkles slowly
O'er the dying day.

The cloudlets, faintly shining
Like flowers that fade away,
Seem a garland twining
For the dying day.

The heart's regret and longing,
And joys that cannot stay,
To the grave are thronging
With the dying day.

“It is very pretty,” said Mrs. Wyndham;
“but I like the English ones best because I
can understand them.”

“You are perfectly right,” replied her host-
ess; “we will have one little English one for
the last”:

The roses blooming, blooming,
Strewed blossoms on his way;
No cloud of sorrow looming,
On life's bright morning lay.

She passed, a thing of beauty,
So marvellously sweet;
Honor he left, and duty,
To worship at her feet.

She cared not that he loved her,
No word of pity spake;
No kind compassion moved her
That one more heart should break.

The roses falling, falling,
Lay withered on his grave;
The Autumn winds went calling:
Love has no power to save.

The song ended in a sob, and its accompaniment with a chord in which all hopelessness seemed concentrated. For a moment there was silence in the room. Harold leaned against the piano, with a shiver, and Emily gave a sort of stifled groan.

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Wyndham, at last, wiping her eyes; “I feel as if I had been at my own funeral.”

Her speech broke the spell. They all laughed a little, nervously.

“Who wrote those words?” asked Emily; “I never heard them before.”

“They are by that person whom, as a child, I remember thinking so prolific a writer—Anonymous,” answered Helena, smiling.

During the week of their acquaintance Harold, who was very observant, had been constantly on the watch to detect in Helena some shadow of arrogance or desire to display her varied accomplishments, but without success. Emily had been profuse in her admiration of

Mrs. Raimond's words and deeds, but he had not addressed her a syllable which could be construed into a compliment. Now he bent over her, saying in a low tone, —

“So you add that sin to all the rest?”

“*Et tu, Brute?*” retorted Helena, with a roguish look in her eyes.

Harold blushed and drew back. There was little in the words either had spoken, yet each had conveyed volumes to the other. The others had not noticed this little episode. Helena now rose from the piano, and crossing the room, seated herself in a chair near the window where Emily stood. Emily, who was taller than Helena, laid her arm timidly about Helena's neck.

“How can I ever thank you, Mrs. Raimond?” she whispered at her ear.

“My dear girl,” replied Helena, gently, “your pleasure and your sweet appreciation are better thanks than I deserve;” and taking the young girl's hand in hers, she raised it to her lips. The color rushed over Emily's face and neck. No one had ever kissed her hand before, and that this radiant creature, who composed music

and sang like an angel, should perform towards her what she considered an act of homage, was almost more than she could bear. The room fairly spun before her. Meanwhile, Helena, quite unconscious of the commotion she had created in her youthful admirer's heart, was saying calmly, —

“Will you please shut the terrace-door, Mr. Hart; it is growing chilly: Mrs. Wyndham may take cold.”

“Oh! we must not stay another minute,” said Mrs. Wyndham, rising and wiping her eyes once more. “My dear lady,” she continued, clasping Helena's hand, warmly; “I don't know why I should thank you for making me miserable, for I have not cried so much in a long time; but I do thank you. It has really been a wonderful experience.”

CHAPTER V.

I SIGNORI BIANCHI.

AFTER the evening described in the preceding chapter, Mrs. Wyndham never again uttered a derogatory word concerning Helena, nor attempted to place any restraint upon her daughter's intercourse with her. It became an established custom for the four to pass the evenings together in Helena's apartment, and the younger people were rarely separated for more than a few hours at a time. It had been a dry winter, and by way of compensation the first half of May was very wet. Often the ladies could only escape from the house for a few moments during the intervals between the showers, but they had Helena's books and music

as a resource, and the bad weather afforded an excellent opportunity for the pursuance of the Italian lessons. These, in which Harold shared, took place in the forenoons in Helena's *salon*, and were productive of much enjoyment both to teacher and pupils. "There would be more incitement to the study of Italian if the modern Italian literature were of more importance," remarked Harold, one morning, as they closed their books.

"Yes," said Emily; "for instance, there are hardly any novels, — are there? — except the few famous classics."

"A certain number of novelists have lately come into notice," Helena answered; "but they are rarely of the first excellence. Farina, Verga, Matilde Serao and Fogazzaro are among the best. Here is the 'Vita Militare' by De Amicis, which I shall give you to read soon. I think very highly of it. De Amicis was an officer in the army during some part of the struggle for Italian unity, and these sketches of Military Life are drawn from his own experience. Many of them are very touching, and arouse all one's faith in the better qualities of human nature.

De Amicis himself has some charming traits of character. He is never ashamed of his youth ; he portrays his sentiments and impressions with a refreshing frankness. He takes almost a childlike delight in all that is beautiful, surprising or novel, and with this open-heartedness and absence of reserve he combines strength of purpose and many sterling qualities. To spend an hour in his company is like taking a sun-bath.—The association of ideas is a curious thing,” she continued, after a pause. “De Amicis’ pages often recall to me a walk I once took in the Spreewald in Germany on a Sunday morning. The Wends, in their bright-colored costumes and fluttering white head-dresses, were on their way to church. We all passed through the cornfields, where the grain, breast high, was interspersed with cornflowers and poppies ; a gentle summer breeze was blowing, and the silence was complete, save for the sound of the larks as they mounted into the sky. I used to think too that De Amicis had ‘God’s gift of the morning-star,’ as Mr. Browning puts it. You remember, Miss Emily.”

“Oh, yes,” said Emily ; “and you make me

long to read him though I fear my less vivid imagination might not discover in him all that you do."

"You have been describing the man as he appears to you rather than the author," remarked Harold. "Do you suppose this to be a fair specimen of the Italian character?"

I believe so, at least of the better class of Italians. De Amicis is a Piedmontese, the race to which, as you know, Italy chiefly owes her present position. The Piedmontese remind me of our New Englanders in their thrift, their love of order, and their recognition of the idea of duty."

"But I thought Italians were a very untrustworthy people," said the young man.

"The English-speaking races often have very prejudiced ideas about the Continental nations," replied Helena. "My experience has led me to love and admire the Italians. They seem to me to resemble more closely what we imagine the Greeks to have been than any other extant nation. They have not the all-eclipsing intellectual ascendancy, but they possess much of that 'eternal childhood' which is one of the

most attractive characteristics of the Greeks. They are proud, sensitive and easily jealous; but they are wonderfully free from personal vanity, generous, frank and unreserved, and utterly without self-consciousness, — a most enviable trait for the rest of us who never can forget ourselves.”

“But are they truthful?” asked Harold, “You have omitted the essential point.”

“They are not deceitful in the broad sense of the term,—that is, they are loyal to their beliefs and their friends; but when it comes to the minute affairs of everyday life, no people have such a strict regard for truth as the Anglo-Saxons. They inflict upon others and subject themselves to a multitude of inconveniences rather than deviate a hair’s breadth from the fact; while an Italian never hesitates to make himself and everyone else comfortable by a few graceful lies. — Indeed, to speak the truth myself,” added Helena, laughing, “I think they have a dislike to a plain unvarnished statement. They prefer a little arabesque and ornamentation.”

“I could never accept that,” said Harold,

emphatically ; “ yea must be yea, and nay, nay. How can there be any real friendship between two persons, and how can there be mutual confidence and trust if there is not sincerity of speech ? How can I expect to believe or be believed where truthfulness is not the habit of the mind ? I hope I am not intolerant, I hope I can forgive and condone a great many faults, but I cannot pardon deceit in any form.”

“ I assure you, you are too severe,” returned Helena ; “ you must remember that everyone is not born with a line of ancestors who have adhered so strictly to the letter that it has become almost impossible for their descendants to utter a falsehood. *You* feel a natural repugnance to a lie ; but it is an easy thing for many. I know how easy, for I am half French myself. You need not look shocked, my dear Miss Emily, I have not told either of you any lies yet. And then, Mr. Hart, the wonder really is that the Italians are even as honorable and truthful as they are, under the influence of the Catholic Church, which is the propagator and aider and abettor of deceptions. You were in Rome during Holy Week, Miss Emily, and

you must have noticed in St. Peter's the long rods protruding from the confessionals that were occupied by priests; and perhaps you sometimes saw persons kneeling before a confessional to be touched on the head by the rod. That blow remits all venial sins, among which, fortunately for most people, lying is included."

"If I were to make my home away from America, I would rather it should be among a Protestant people," observed Harold.

"And to me," said Helena, "there is no country so sympathetic as Italy. She appeals to my heart, my sentiment, my imagination. There is no sky so blue, no atmosphere so balmy, no people so simple, so winning, even if they do tell fibs, Mr. Hart. I will cast in my fortune with theirs, and this lovely land shall be my fatherland."

"Why do you not use the words of Ruth, and have done with it?" suggested Harold, with a smile.

"It would be no over-statement," Helena assented.

"Ah!" sighed Emily; "it is indeed most beautiful! Think, Harold, of our visit in

Naples, and our first week here! I thought there could not be a second such paradise on earth. And then my month in Rome! That is an ineffaceable memory."

"If you want to be loyal to your native land, never go to Rome to stay," said Helena; "for it exercises a fascination that holds one against friends and kin and country. The charm is slow to come, but it penetrates into the very fibres of one's being; it is indescribable in words, but it never weakens nor diminishes. Goethe's father said he never could be quite unhappy again after having seen Naples; but *I* say anyone who has once felt the spell of Rome never can be quite happy except within the circle of the Seven Hills."

"I heard some people talking very much like you in our *pension*," said Emily, "and one lady, a new-comer, told them she had heard a great deal about the Roman fever, and now she knew what it was."

"Let them laugh," said Helena, smiling to herself; "the fascination of Rome is only the culminating effect of the general influence of Italy. Let me read you what a delightful

English author says about ancient Italy, and that part of it where we are now;” and taking a vellum-covered album from the table, she read aloud the following extracts from Symonds’ “Renaissance in Italy”:—

“The very names of Parthenope, Pozzuoli, Inarime, Sorrento, Capri, have their fascination. There, too, the orange and lemon groves are more luxuriant, the grapes yield sweeter and more intoxicating wine, the volcanic soil is more fertile, the waves are bluer and the sun is brighter than elsewhere in the land. None of the conquerors of Italy have had the force to resist the allurements of the Bay of Naples. The Greeks lost their native energy upon these shores and realized in the history of their colonies the myth of Ulysses’ comrades in the gardens of Circe. Hannibal was tamed by Capua. The Romans, in their turn, dreamed away their vigor at Baiæ, at Pompeii, at Capreæ, until the whole region became a by-word for voluptuous living. Here the Saracens were subdued to mildness, and became physicians instead of pirates. Lombards and Normans alike were softened down, and lost their bar-

barous fierceness amid the enchantments of the Southern sorceress.'

“ And again, speaking of the Middle Ages :

“ ‘ To the captains and soldiery of France, Italy already appeared a splendid and fascinating Circe, arrayed with charms, surrounded with illusions, hiding behind perfumed thickets her victims changed to brutes, and building the couch of her seduction on the bones of murdered men. Yet she was so beautiful that, halt as they might for a moment and gaze back with yearning on the Alps that they had crossed, they found themselves unable to resist her smile. Forward they must march, through the garden of enchantment, henceforth taking the precaution to walk with drawn swords, and, like Orlando in Morgana's Park, to stuff their casques with roses that they might not hear the siren's voice too clearly. It was thus that Italy began the part she played through the Renaissance for the people of the North. ‘ The White Devil of Italy ’ is the title of one of Webster's best tragedies. A white devil, a radiant daughter of sin and death, holding in her hands the fruit of the knowledge of

good and evil, and tempting the nations to eat : this is how Italy struck the fancy of the men of the sixteenth century. She was feminine and they were virile ; but she could teach, and they must learn. She gave them pleasure ; they brought force. The fruit of her embraces with the nations was the spirit of modern culture, the genius of the age in which we live.' ”

“ It is beautifully expressed,” said Emily, as Helena ceased.

“ And the results are grand,” added Harold ; “ but surely you cannot call that good doctrine from a moral point of view. Aught we not to resist and crush the desire for such charms and allurements as threaten to rob us of our force ? Are we not to resist to the end the seductions of a Circe ? There can be no compromise with the agents of sin and death.”

“ O ! you unmitigated Anglo-Saxon ! ” cried Helena. “ One must fight and struggle, combat and resist, then, from the weary beginning to the weary end ? The eye shall never be sweetly blinded by enchantments, nor the ear soothed with the dulcet measures of the sirens' songs ! Armed to the teeth, in armor impene-

trable, you shall set your face grimly against the soft delights of ease and repose? You will die sword in hand, and there shall be no charm, no gentle green-sward, no sweet luxuriance along the rock-bound coast on which your barque goes down at last."

"I did not mean to convey quite that impression," answered Harold seriously; "but at least you will admit that the Anglo-Saxon perseverance, uprightness and resistance of temptation have been of immense benefit to the world; and that the very rigidity of our principles has formed, as it were, the backbone of modern civilization."

"'Ye are the salt of the world,'" replied Helena, sarcastically; "but at times the salt has lost its savor. There have been periods in English history as corrupt as in that of any other nation, and you have not always monopolized certain qualities on which you pride yourselves so much. Take, for instance, a single example. Columbus was an Italian. You cannot find more devotion to a great idea, more constancy and determination to overcome obstacles, and more heroic self-forgetfulness than were com-

bined in him. And I need not remind you of the characters of Michael Angelo and Dante; they must certainly command your admiration."

"I never doubted that there existed great and earnest men of every nationality," Harold answered; "please do not wilfully mistake me. But let us waive the point. We all know something of the past of Italy, and here is its present about us now; what do you suppose its future will be?"

"These things lie on the lap of the gods," Helena replied; "but I think the friends of Italy are growing more hopeful about her every day. Within the kingdom there are, in some respects, as heterogeneous elements as those contained in our own enormous country. True, they have not the problem of a half-civilized indigenous race to deal with, nor that of imported foreign populations; but the difference between the various portions of the country is very great. It is a land composed of separate units, only gradually becoming fused and melted into a whole; and the diversity between our own North and South is hardly more striking than that between the North and South of

Italy. The present government has suffered more disturbance from the two Sicilies than from all the rest of the country put together; and those provinces are a continual drag upon the prosperity and progress of the land. The population of the North is frugal and industrious, that of the South superstitious and lazy. Nevertheless, there has been a great change for the better during the last ten years. The people of Naples itself are still addicted to vice, still, to a great extent, beggars and thieves; but the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the surrounding province have become much ameliorated by the regulations of an enlightened form of government and the contact with foreigners. Then Italy has been filled with factions and dissatisfied bodies of men. There is the Papal party, forever opposing an ineffectual but obstinate resistance to the decrees of government; there is a large Republican party, many members of which submitted to the leadership of the House of Savoy as the only possible issue to the state of affairs, but who cannot calmly renounce the vision of a republic for which they fought and their friends

and brothers fell ; then there is the party of *Italia Irredenta*, which is bent upon the entire redemption, the geographical unity of Italy. It clamors to have included in her territory all portions of her natural soil which have, by treaty or long possession, become a part of other nations. They even wish to annex to Italy a large slice of Austria, in which Italian is the prevailing language. The Peace of Villafranca, by which Nice and Savoy were ceded to France and Austria was left in possession of Venice, was an awful blow to the country, and revealed in the clearest light the purely selfish policy which had instigated the third Napoleon's assistance of Italy. But while the wishes of the Irredenta party are natural enough and are probably cherished in secret by all their countrymen,—to insist upon their accomplishment is madness. Before all things, Italy has needed peace, and these people would have been quite capable of plunging her into a war. To control these various factions ; to educate an unprepared people to appreciate the advantages of a constitutional government ; to develop the resources and protect the products

of a land so long overridden by priests, oppressed beneath a foreign yoke, and drained by successions of wars and revolutions,—required wiser and more able statesmen than the country has always possessed. Then there is another point which sometimes makes me tremble, though perhaps it is only a woman's sentimental feeling. Italy *has been*. Hers was the oldest of modern literatures and gave the impulse to all the rest. Almost every form of music was invented on her soil. In painting she was unrivalled,—one may say, unapproached. In science and the liberal professions she stood first. She was the storehouse from which Europe drew. Now, history teaches us one unvarying lesson. The great nations of antiquity flourished and passed away; in modern times, Spain and Italy rose and fell. It is ever permitted to a nation to grow great twice, and may this one ever again attain to a really prominent position among European nations!”

“But one may consider that in the Renaissance Italy has already enjoyed a second existence,” said Harold; “for the glory of that period to which you have just referred

shone upon the spot where the centre of Roman civilization had been.”

“That is true,” assented Helena; “and when one remembers how many times the city of Rome has been devastated by fire and sword and pillage, and how it has risen again and again, one is tempted to believe in its title of ‘eternal.’ When one recalls how from the earliest times until no very remote date the country has been torn and ravaged and trampled upon, and then sees how fair and blooming it has again become, one almost dares to take it as a token that a regenerating spirit is at work in the land, and to hope for it a third life as glorious and more enduring than the other two. Besides, apart from this somewhat sentimental train of reasoning, those who are wiser than I declare that Italy with her position between two seas and her fruitful soil contains within herself the seed of prosperity which cannot fail to develop under the impulse given to industry by a free and settled government. They say that some of the conditions which seemed disadvantageous to the country have really been beneficial, such, for instance,

as the abstinence of the Clerical party from all participation in municipal affairs. They say that the Irredenta and Republican parties have diminished, and that the signs of reconciliation between the Liberals and the Clericals are becoming continually more apparent, — that although much remains to be done, very much has been done already, more even than appears on the surface.”

“What few Italians I have met, have seemed to me pretty well satisfied with themselves,” remarked Harold.

“You have touched precisely a point which causes me great uneasiness. I think the greatest danger — I will not say to Italian prosperity, but to Italian character — is the sort of self-satisfaction many of them display. Because they have done so well, they think they have done everything. There was some truth, too, in the captain’s remarks the other night, though not in the sense in which he meant them. ‘The modern Italians rest too much upon their past.’ Because they were once first in all departments, they fancy this still to be the case: forgetting how, when they were

lying crushed beneath the heel of the conqueror, the other nations were progressing until they have surpassed them in almost all branches."

"Well, for the sake of your sympathy, I will hope that their conceit will not be taken out of them by defeat in war. They seem to be steadily preparing for war. Do they wish for it?"

"I do not think any European nation really wishes for war, and I do not think we shall see more than one more war during our lifetime. Perhaps there will never be another after us. That the European nations have abstained from war so long under such trying conditions, is sufficient proof of how great the shrinking from that kind of solution has become, how strong is the leaning towards peace. Still, when war does come, the Italians will be ready, and will doubtless regard it as a means of national aggrandizement. In case of a successful issue, they will undoubtedly regain some of their former territory. I wish they were masters of every foot of it!"

"Are not the King and Queen much beloved?" asked Emily.

“Yes, indeed ; except, perhaps, the Emperor of Germany, they are the most popular sovereigns in Europe. Speaking of the German Emperor, there is a capital anecdote told of his visit to Naples. You know how devoted the Italian people are to the lottery. Well, before the Emperor’s arrival the Neapolitans played on the number corresponding to “emperor” and on two others signifying circumstances connected with his visit. All three numbers were drawn that week, and they won large sums of money. No wonder their enthusiasm for the Emperor was so intense.”

“They seemed very enthusiastic about the Queen in Rome,” remarked Emily.

“Yes, and she deserves it. She is an intellectual, cultivated woman, gracious and affable, and full of fine traits — quite an ideal sovereign. They say the King consults her about all the affairs of the State.”

“What a grave-looking man Umberto is !” said Harold.

“There is something pathetic to me in his seriousness,” replied Helena, “and in the premature old age which has fallen upon him.

And he seems to me one of the most admirable figures in contemporaneous history. Everyone knows of his splendid conduct when the cholera was raging in Naples. Wherever there is suffering or disaster, there he is to be found. He is the soul of generosity also, which makes the economy he forces himself to practice all the more commendable. There is no one whom I do not know personally, for whom I have such a sincere regard as Umberto. You may think me extravagant; but I think I have no stronger desire than that for the advancement and welfare of Italy."

"It is a generous sentiment," said Harold, rising as he spoke. "But I see the weather is clearing, and I must go for my tramp. Much as I should like to stay with you, I must be true to my principles, and tear myself away from Circe and the sirens."

"Very well," cried Helena. — "No, I will not shake hands with you, nor when you return, either, unless you bring us a bunch of roses as big as your head as some amends for the ease with which you leave us alone. Well, Emily and I will read De Amicis and adore Italy with-

out you. Stay as long as you please, and you will find that we support your absence with uncommon equanimity.”

Harold started on a long walk, as was his daily custom, — rain or shine, — and when he returned, several hours later, was laden with branches of wild-roses, which he bestowed as a peace-offering upon Helena.

That night there was a heavy thunder-shower. At one moment the horizon seemed one sheet of white light; at the next, jagged darts of lightning tore the black clouds asunder. Crash followed crash in bewildering succession, and torrents of rain fell. But towards midnight the peals of thunder became less frequent, the flashes less terrible, and finally the rain ceased and the stars began to peer through the rifts in the clouds; and when our friends awoke, on the following morning, the sun was shining brightly in the bluest of heavens; and from that moment the days dawned and died in unbroken splendor, hardly a cloud obscured the summer sky and not a drop of rain fell for four whole months.

The exodus which Helena had predicted had

occurred; even the Italian officers had left Sorrento, and Helena and the Wyndhams had the hotel to themselves. They felt no need of other companions. Mrs. Wyndham amused herself contentedly with some novels and a great piece of worsted work; while for the younger people there followed some weeks of an ideal life,— a life *à trois*, which is often pleasanter than one *à deux*, especially when each two are in perfect sympathy and the presence of the third is never felt as a restraint.

Helena had too much tact ever to intrude upon the liberty of the others. After the first advances she let them seek her; but both Harold and Emily enjoyed more in her society than they had ever done alone. She revealed to them many a beauty which might have escaped their observation, and unclosed for them many a hitherto sealed book. Emily, in her generous enthusiasm, and Harold in the half-unconscious surrender of his being to Helena's intoxicating charm, agreed that their new friend was almost able to paint the lily and gild refined gold.

In compliance with Helena's suggestion, they

had adopted the Italian mode of life: rising early and devoting the warm hours of the afternoon to repose. Sometimes they took Mrs. Wyndham for a drive to Massa, or along the completed portion of the new road to Amalfi; but oftener they roamed about the country on foot or on donkeys, returning before noon, through the narrow lanes, between the high walls jealously guarding the orange-groves.

The friends soon became known in Sorrento and the surrounding country as "*I Signori Bianchi*," because they were always attired in white flannel suits. The Italian people are never satisfied until they have attached to all familiar persons or objects some characterizing adjective. The beggars lying in wait along the roads called them also "*i buoni forestieri*," and hailed their approach with delight, aware that it meant a shower of copper coins into their battered hats.

"Our conduct is simply scandalous," Helena would protest, laughing. "We are retarding the progress of this country by indiscriminate almsgiving."

"But it is so hard to refuse a sou when one

is happy, Emily would reply. "It seems to me as if I ought to share some little portion of my own content with these poor creatures."

Their excursions included all the points of view in the neighborhood, and brought them once or twice to the high hill-top of Deserto, where a few Gray friars superintend an agricultural school for boys. Sometimes they would stop to rest in some little church, where most probably a priest would be celebrating a silent mass to the edification of a congregation of sun-burned fishermen with earrings in their ears, women in short woollen skirts and colored handkerchiefs thrown over their heads, and quantities of children. Not a word was audible except when the priest, turning towards the people, would extend his hands and bring them together again with the formula: "*Dominus Vobiscum*;" to which the peasant boy, assisting at the altar in his working-clothes, would respond: "*Et cum Spiritu tuo.*" When, at the tinkling of the bell, the priest raised the Cup and the whole assembly fell upon their knees, Helena also would kneel upon the brick pavement, and as she rose, Emily was

sure that she, like the others, made the sign of the cross. On one of these occasions, as they were leaving the church, Helena stopped to ask a question of a pretty young peasant woman with a child in her arms.

The woman, after replying, caught her hand and carried it to her lips.

“*Voi siete bella come la Madonna,*” she said, with an expression of intense admiration in oer dark eyes; “*e voi sietie cattolica; andrete in Paradiso.*”

“I cannot help wondering whether that is true,” said Harold, as they descended the steps.

“That I shall go to heaven?” asked Helena, laughing.

“That you are a Catholic. Forgive me if I presume too much; but you do not seem like a Catholic, and I have often heard you inveigh against the Church.”

“Yes, so I do sometimes. My action to-day and on similar occasions is partly the result of habit. One does not hear mass every day for years for nothing. I was partly educated in a convent, you know. I cannot divest myself of

a certain awe at the moment of the Elevation, although it means nothing to me, personally."

"One may be respectful; but I do not see how one can appear to worship what one does not believe in," said Harold.

"Oh! I know you are uncompromising; but here I flatter myself I am your superior. I remember what that symbol means to others, and, for the moment, I can become one with them. Besides, one's conscience is elastic in the matter of form when one does not believe in anything in particular."

"What do you mean?" asked Emily, somewhat shocked. "Have you no beliefs?"

"Beliefs? Hardly. Speculations, fancies, perhaps even hopes, — that is all. There was a time when I thought I knew a few things and believed several more; but experience cured me of that. How can one be sure of anything in the face of the enormous influence of education and circumstance? One would have been one thing in one place, and another in another. It is all a mere accident. I continually find persons with very different ideas of right and wrong, who, as far as *I*

can see, stand on an equally high moral plane.”

“This is pure agnosticism,” said Harold, as Helena paused.

“Call it what you will. I only know that the shield which was gold on one side and silver on the other is an inadequate expression of the fact. Almost every question seems to me better symbolized by a kaleidoscope, whose figures vary as the hand which holds it moves, and everything changes its aspect according to the point of view from which it is regarded.”

“Such an uncertain state of mind must be very dreary,” observed Emily.

“It depends upon temperament,” replied Helena; “it is not considered an enviable condition to be in. However, — don’t you see? — we are just the people for whom the Church lies in wait; when the burden imposed on us by the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge becomes too heavy to be borne, she offers us a draught of Lethe and rest within her bosom. Extremes meet, you know. However, I don’t believe she will get me,” she added, lightly. “Mine is a case of ‘forewarned, forearmed.’”

“It is hardly a subject to jest about,” said Harold.

“No, no, I am not jesting; but before we leave the subject—I do not think you are just to Catholicism in America.”

“We see in it the opponent of progress and the upholder of ignorance, and we anticipate from it some of the worst evils which may befall our country,” said Harold, warmly.

“Yet it has another and a beautiful side; it is a real refuge to many, and it is a true democracy. One of its most attractive features to me is the impartiality with which it extends its privileges to all classes of society.

“But I suppose fashion penetrates within its precincts as well as everywhere else,” remarked Emily.

“Of course, there are fashionable churches and others, in the poorer quarters of the cities, mostly frequented by the populace; but in Rome, for instance, one continually sees rich and poor, grand ladies in silks and velvets and peasant men and women from the Campagna, kneeling side by side before what they have been taught to reverence and adore.

The princes of the Church have often risen from the ranks of the people, and within her inclosure there is, for intelligence and ability, an almost certain path to honor and emolument. You remember the French saying, '*Etre duchesse et être jeune,*' supposed to describe the highest state of felicity attainable by a woman? I have often thought that to be a fairly liberal-minded cardinal would be the acme of masculine well-being. Don't you think you would like to be a cardinal, Mr. Hart?"

"You *will* jest; but I am so stupid and serious. That path to glory seems to me beset with danger to the character, distorted by ambition and stained by corruption."

"What do you think of our secular republics, where he is the best man who can seize first and grasp firmest?"

"Oh! there is enough evil to be deplored everywhere, but I would rather take my chance with the new forms of government, and I believe the time is past when a position of exceptional distinction best enables us to serve our fellow-men,—which is, after all, the end and purpose of individual being."

“You are very generous; but I assure you, the community of religion is a great bond, hardly less than that of language, between the servers and the served, and brings the different classes of society into kinder relations than almost anything else can do.”

“It was not always so,” replied Harold; “for social distinctions were greatest at a period when a difference of religious belief was unknown. But it would be indeed hard if there were not some advantage, or at least some compensation to be drawn from everything.”

“Miss Emily,” called Helena, “I hope the view from Deserto has compensated you for this jolting under the hot sun. One thing I do believe,” she added, with a laugh, “that he who dances must pay the piper. More elegantly speaking, everyone who witnesses the comedy of existence is taxed for the privilege. Sometimes Nemesis exacts the fee when the show is half over, sometimes she waits till the curtain is about to fall, and sometimes she has a mean way of requiring it in dribblets all along and spoiling all one’s enjoyment of the play — like a railway conductor who comes to tear off

a leaf of your ticket every two hours during the night, so that you can never get to sleep."

"If a strict balance between pleasure and suffering were required of us, the account against me would be very heavy," said Emily; "for I have had enjoyment enough in these last few weeks to last a lifetime. But I am not so superstitious as to believe anything of the kind. I thankfully accept all the happiness that comes to me, and I hope that its memory will help me through darker days, if they should be in store."

"You have learned wisdom early, Emily," said Harold, with an affectionate smile. Helena smiled also. After a pause she said: "It is a pity to be in a Catholic country and not at least witness some of its ceremonies. Come with me to-night to that little chapel not far from our house. This is the last night of May, you know; and the month of May, which is the month of the Virgin, is celebrated there with especial solemnity. I have been there in former years and found it really interesting."

The others acceded readily to Helena's proposal, and betook themselves that evening to

the chapel she had mentioned. It was hardly larger than a small room, and was gaudily decorated with white banners, laurel-wreaths, candles and flowers.

It was crowded with peasant women and a few women of the better classes bearing black lace veils upon their heads.

At the tinkling of a bell a young woman recited the Mysteries of Mary, after which the others repeated the Litany: "*Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis,*" etc. This was followed by some singing, at the conclusion of which a Franciscan friar, in brown robes and a rope round his waist, preached in glowing language a sermon on the Virgin Mary. In conclusion the usual Benediction service was performed. At the Elevation of the Host, there occurred just outside the door a tremendous explosion of *mortaletti*, a kind of large torpedo or bomb with which on religious festivals the Southern Italians are accustomed to italicize their veneration of the Almighty. On this occasion, as a still more striking manifestation, the boys had kindled great bonfires, the flames of which mounted twenty or thirty feet in the air.

Emily gave her mother such a graphic description of this experience that Mrs. Wyndham was seized with a desire to behold something of a similar nature, and on the Octave of Corpus Christi they all went to see the procession in the village of Sorrento, where some relatives of the *padrone* of Cocumella had offered them places upon their balcony.

The feast of Corpus Domini, established in comparatively recent times by the Romish Church, in honor of the dogma of the Real Presence, is celebrated in all Catholic countries with greater pomp than that attending any of the original festivals.

On the present occasion in Sorrento, altars were erected at intervals along the streets and portions of the pavements covered with carpets. Beside the altar, opposite the balcony in which our friends were stationed, stood pots of blossoming plants, while the altar itself was loaded with flowers and images and candles, the latter being lighted hastily as the procession approached.

First came a band of music playing a lively quickstep; then, carrying banners, came com-

panies of men in white garments faced with red or blue or green ; then a long troop of white-robed boys bearing lighted candles ; then priests in black gowns and white, lace-edged surplices ; then the canons of the cathedral in crimson ; then a number of little girls representing angels, robed in white, with blue veils and wreaths of flowers upon their heads, and flowers disposed fantastically about their dress. Behind them, under a baldachin, came the priest bearing the Host, accompanied by an attendant holding a sort of Chinese umbrella over his head, and by two other priests.

All three were attired in shining white vestments embroidered with gold. After them followed a crowd of women and children and a few men chanting in unison with the priests and canons. As the priest bearing the Host ascended the steps of the altar, assistants and spectators fell upon their knees : in the streets, on the balconies, wherever they happened to be.

In one direction, as far as the eye could see, were the white-robed figures and the flickering candles ; in the other, the lighted altar and the multitude of women in many-colored garbs.

The first dusk of evening descended like a mantle upon the spectacle, softening and heightening its effect. The chanting ceased. The priest, raising the Host, turned it from side to side, that the rays of its glory might fall impartially on all. Then came the usual explosion of *mortaletti*; all rose from their knees, and the procession continued on its way.

When the streets had cleared, Helena thanked their hostess in the name of all, and they started on their homeward road.

“Well, what do you think of it?” she asked, appealing to the others.

“It was the most poetic sight I ever saw,” answered Emily.

“And just like a show at the theatre,” added her mother.

“Yes, it is theatrical; but to me there is something wonderfully touching in it, too.”

“Artistically speaking, it was a beautiful picture,” said Harold. “I wish I could forget the ignorance and superstition which render such representations possible.”

“But I am not sure that we are just with regard to these shows and pageants,” returned

Helena ; “ they are these people’s poetry. Why should we wish to deprive them of it ? ”

“ That band was out of place,” observed Mrs. Wyndham ; “ at least they might play something a little less lively,—not as if they were leading a parcel of soldiers to a parade-ground.”

“ They have not much feeling for the fitness of things,” said Helena. “ Before you came, there was a procession at St. Agnello, and the band actually entered the church playing a quickstep to which one might have danced ; and at the Elevation they went off — of all things, — into the Italian national air. I suppose the priest did not recognize it.”

“ I have heard waltzes played on the organ in the churches here,” said Emily.

“ Well, I am glad I’m not a Catholic, and that such things aren’t permitted in my religion,” said the elder lady.

After this evening the weather grew very warm, and there was a lull for a time in the young people’s excursions. Often, when not inclined for a long ramble, they sought a shady corner of the garden with books and

work, or, passing down the garden-path now white with fallen petals, descended the winding staircases and the passages cut out of the soft tufa-rock, to the water's edge, where they would establish themselves on a sort of promontory that jutted out into the sea. Here they would sit for hours: sometimes in a dreamy silence, sometimes proceeding with the Italian lessons, or sometimes Emily would read aloud while Harold and Helena sketched. Sometimes a little row-boat, whose owner had perceived them from a distance, would come to their peninsula and take them out to sea. In this way they visited the fragments of Roman ruins still remaining upon the Sorrento Point, and the many-colored grottoes which form a peculiar feature of this coast.

“What mischief have you been about, now, Mr. Hart?” Helena asked, one morning, when she and Harold had been working diligently for some time while Emily bent over the “Last Days of Pompeii.”—“Don't you suppose I can see your satisfied smile and the pretence you make of shutting your book?”

“Only an amused smile, not a satisfied one,”

returned Harold, handing her his sketch-book ;
“ I cannot hope to do my subject justice.”

It was a sketch of the two young women : Emily in a half-crouching position, her book resting on her knee and her head on her hand, her brow concealed beneath her broad-brimmed hat ; Helena, leaning against a camp-stool with raised head and eyes, looking out towards the horizon, pencil and sketch-book lying on her lap.

“ It is not bad,” she said, in an interested tone ; “ you must have a great talent for catching likenesses. — Look, Miss Emily, do you know yourself ? ”

“ It is capital of me,” cried Emily, “ and good of you, too, Mrs. Raimond ; and you were harder to take than I.”

“ May I offer it to you, Mrs. Raimond ? ” asked Harold.

“ I shall be delighted,” was the reply ; and cutting the leaf out of his book, Harold presented it to her with a bow.

Emily had hoped he would give it to her ; but she said nothing. This hasty sketch was only the tangible manifestation of a desire

that had taken possession of Harold's mind. A day or two later, Emily said to Helena: "Harold has a great favor to ask of you, so great that he is afraid to mention it himself, and he has asked me to be the petitioner."

"Dear me! what dreadful thing does he want?" asked Helena, with a clear conviction of what was coming.

"He wants to know if you would permit him to paint your portrait, and if he might copy it afterwards for a picture he means to paint. He says he has thought of it ever since he saw you."

"Well, I don't know that I ever sat for a model yet, though my portrait has been painted several times, and hideous-looking things the amateur artist generally contrived to make of me," said Helena, laughing at the remembrance of the monstrosities which had been intended to resemble her. "But I should think," she added, rather coldly, "that Mr. Hart could prefer his requests himself."

"Oh! don't be provoked with Harold," exclaimed Emily. "It is my stupidity. I was to ask you if you objected to sitting in a

general way ; and if you did, the subject would not have been referred to again, and you would have been spared the trouble of refusing. But I do hope you will consent. I am sure Harold would make a beautiful picture. And if you did not want to be recognized, perhaps he could disguise you a little, and, of course, he would give you the portrait."

"Well, go and bring your Harold here ; we will see what arrangements we can make."

Emily left the room, and returned in a few minutes leading Harold by the hand.

"I hear you have a deep design against me, Mr. Hart," Helena began.

"I should be so happy, it would be such a great favor to me, if you would allow me to paint your portrait," Harold answered. "Is it asking too much?"

"Emily says you want to put me into a picture ; what is it exactly?"

"I want to paint a picture of that scene in Iliad where Helen is sitting at the loom weaving into the web the strifes of Greeks and Trojans, and Iris comes to summon her before Priam at the Scæan Gate. I cannot read

Greek as you do, but I know this passage by heart. I have found no one yet for Iris; but ever since I have known you, it has been my dearest wish to have you sit to me for Helen."

"It would be hard not to make another person happy with so small a service," said Helena, kindly. "I will sit to you — only not too long at a time."

"Impose your own conditions, and I shall be perfectly happy," cried Harold, joyfully. "Only if you could let me begin soon."

"To-morrow, if you like," returned Helena.

Accordingly, the following morning, Helena having declared herself ready, Harold began to draw.

"Be sure you make it pretty enough, Harold," said Emily, looking over his shoulder as he made the first strokes. — "'On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set.' You see," she added with a blush to Helena, "I have not been studying your Shakespeare's sonnets in vain."

"I wish you would call me by my name," said Helena, with a winning smile. "I am not what the Germans call a 'respects-person,' and I hate unnecessary titles. I have involuntarily

fallen into a habit of calling you Emily; call me Helena, will you?"

Emily was surprised. Her education had taught her never to forget a difference in age and the outward forms of respect due from a younger to an older person. To her, Helena's superior years seemed to place her, in some respects, on an unattainable height; but her surprise was exceeded by the pleasure that Helena's proposal caused her.

"Of course, I am only too happy to have you call me by my name, though that is no reason why I should be allowed to make use of yours. Still, if you wish it, I will try, my dear Helena," she finished, shyly.

"Thank you, my dear Emily," said Helena, with her kindest smile; "now let us seal the compact."

Rising from her seat and folding Emily in her arms, she kissed her, after the foreign fashion, on both cheeks.

"There! an important point is settled," said, laughing; "and I am relieved. Mr. Hart, please go on."

Harold went on, then and

ing his eyes upon the enticing beauty before him, as he might have gazed upon some rare flower, with no thought of gathering it for himself, but joyful at being permitted to share in the delight it caused. The sitting, though short, occurred daily. Very often the young artist was left alone with his beautiful model, sometimes Emily was present. Sometimes she read aloud to the others; more often the three talked together, Helena taking pleasure in entertaining and instructing her younger companions from the stores of her rich experience, disclosing to them more and more the treasures of her fine mind. These hours grew to be the most delightful which the friends passed together; and if there were danger in them, if pain and fever lurked beneath the outer forms of joy and repose, two of the three were unconscious of the fact, while the third drew a thick veil across her clearer vision, preferring blindness to sight. Indeed, Helena could not remember a time, even in the golden days with her father, when she had so long lived in such a state of simplicity and poetry. Her life was purer and sweeter than any she

had ever known, except her love for Cameron himself, filled the hours for her with an indescribable joy. Harold, whose artistic instincts were gratified and fascinated by his surroundings, and whose heart was inflamed with a feeling not yet acknowledged to itself, drifted on as in a dream,— blissfully, supremely happy. Only once a shade of sadness seemed to come over him. He and Helena were alone together one morning, and she had laughingly asked him if painting her portrait required quite such prolonged scrutiny of her countenance.

“Forgive me for staring you out of countenance,” Harold answered, with a touch of melancholy in his voice. “It is not for the picture, it is for myself. I am thinking of the time when these divine days shall be numbered with the past, when you and I shall be parted beyond recall; and I would fain carry away every line of your perfect face engraven on my brain. You need not mind the simple truth, you know. *You* cannot be flattered.”

“Why need we part?” came in a whisper from Helena.

“Because,” replied Harold, apparently un-

conscious of the possible significance of the question, "because our paths lie as far apart as daylight and darkness; because, they say, everything fair and dear must, of its own nature, come to an end."

"Ah!" cried Helena, with a movement as if she were shaking off a burden; "such a speech is more worthy of me than of you, who always take the high-minded view of things. '*Tout casse, tout lasse, tout passe.*' Well, at any rate, the end is not yet. Do not let us spoil this perfect summertide by any shadow of coming sorrow."

The increasing intimacy between Helena and Harold added no drop of bitterness to the cup of Emily's content. On the contrary, it was rather a justification for the division of her heart between the calm security of her affection for her lover and the passionate, romantic admiration a young girl will often feel for a somewhat older woman

"Harold," she said, one morning, when they had left Helena and the young man stood cleaning his brushes before putting them away; "it was I who used to be so enthusiastic about Mrs. Raimond, — Helena, I mean, — at first. What do you think of her now?"

“She is like the sea,” said Harold, slowly. “In the matter of instruction and learning she surrounds one on every side, as the sea does an island; and she suggests even more than she imparts. But this is nothing to the wealth of her nature — that which cannot be learned or added to by instruction. She makes the impression of an elemental force of nature in league with all the rest we have found here. Oh! what days and nights we have had! But it is a fact that both sunlight and starlight are brighter when she is with us.”

He paused, — surprised, almost appalled at his own earnestness. It was the first time that he had attempted to put his feeling into words.

Emily laid her hand affectionately upon his shoulder. No shadow of mistrust or jealousy appeared upon her brow. In the generosity of her nature and the excess of her own adoration, she exulted that her friend should receive such praise.

“I am so glad you do her justice,” she said, triumphantly. “I am quite of your opinion, only you can express it so much better than I.”

CHAPTER VI.

A VISIT TO CAPRI.

THE glorious month of June trailed its shining garments across the globe, and almost before anyone was aware of it, July, even more radiant and glowing, was at hand.

By a caprice of nature not usual in the climate of Southern Italy, the month began with a series of cool days of which the Cocumella party determined to take advantage by making some long-contemplated excursions. In the cool of a July evening, they drove to Pompeii, where they visited the ruins by moonlight and passed the night in the queer little Hotel del Sole. Here, where the glass doors serving for windows stand open con-

tinually, the peacocks have free access to one's bedroom, and one may occasionally find some hanger-on of the establishment making free with one's toilet articles; but the Sole's Lagrime Cristi grown on the slopes of Vesuvius is the best of the moderate-priced wines of that name, and the little cluster of buildings and fantastic garden of the Sole have long formed an oasis of probity in the Neapolitan desert of speculation.

Before six o'clock on the following morning the friends were on their way to Amalfi. The road soon turned inland, passing through village after village, where, in spite of the early hour, bed and breakfast had evidently long been disposed of, and the inhabitants were pursuing their daily avocations with the same zeal that one might find in other countries at a late hour of the forenoon. Men sat in the doorways making shoes; half-clad children ran about the streets; women, seated on the doorsteps or in chairs at the side of the road, knitted, or drew the threads from their distaffs, or submitted the arrangement of their coiffure to helpful friends. The market-places

were crowded. Knots of men stood about lazily, market-women sat behind piles of fruit and vegetables, gossiping with their customers; and now and then a flock of goats would come scrambling past on their way to pasture. The entire population was in the streets. These people hardly use their houses except as sleeping-places, or as refuges during a storm. Doors and windows stood wide open, and in each room one might see a neatly made bed, a deal table covered with cups and saucers and a brass candlestick, and on the walls colored prints of saints, a crucifix and a vessel of holy water.

At Vietri the road strikes the sea again, proceeding in a series of bold undulations along the coast to Amalfi. On the beaches men and women were sifting grain and bearing it away in baskets; sleek bronze-colored boys and youths ran in and out of the water or dove from boats dancing upon the waves; sail-boats came to land and row-boats put off from shore, while, in the distance, the white sails of fishing-craft glistened in the sunlight. Idlers lay in the shadow of the boats drawn up

on the beach or, face downwards, on the sands, and an incessant clatter of tongues mingled with the sound of the breaking waves and the whistling of the wind.

Before noon the party were settled in their quarters in the upper Capuccini Hotel, perhaps unsurpassed in Europe for picturesqueness, originality and beauty of situation.

Late in the afternoon the younger people mounted on donkeys to Ravello, a village high above Amalfi, where an Englishman, Mr. Reed, has long been the owner of the old Rufalo Palace, formerly the property of popes and kings. Visitors are permitted to enter his garden — a bower of roses — and to enjoy from its terraces one of the most exquisite views which the Mediterranean Coast affords.

As our friends descended at evening, women — bent double beneath enormous loads of hay and grass — began to pass them at a gait between a trot and a run.

In this region the men are sailors or fishermen, and the land-labor devolves almost entirely upon the women. During the winter they ascend the mountains at evening, and

pass the night in cutting and collecting the frozen snow used in the summer instead of ice. At sunrise they descend to deposit their loads in storehouses provided for the purpose, or carry it to the boats on which it is transported to Naples and the neighboring towns.

The following day was devoted to a visit to the ruined temples of Paestum, and the night passed at La Cava, a pretty little nest among the hills. The next evening, after a late dinner, the party started on their homeward drive.

The fête of a favorite miracle-working Madonna was made the occasion of a great illumination and display of fireworks throughout this part of the country. On cords stretched across the road were suspended rows of tumblers filled with oil, on which floated lighted wicks; on scaffolding in the squares hung the same sort of primitive lamps, grouped in the shape of hearts and pyramids. As it grew dark, the vicinity of each town was heralded by showers of stars and the whizzing golden serpents of ascending rockets; and as with cries of "*Guai! Guai!*" the coachman urged

his horses at a frantic pace through the crowded streets, the trees and houses loomed before them red and green and lilac in the reflection of the Bengal lights. At last the towns were left behind, and they passed into lonely lanes bordered with vineyards whose clustering grape-vines emitted an odor that mounted to the head like wine. The perfect silence and sweet mystery of a summer night enfolded them. Mrs. Wyndham, assured that there was no danger to apprehend, dozed in her corner of the carriage. Emily, sunk in the agreeable lassitude succeeding a novel experience, a state in which one wishes that the present moment might stretch into eternity if thereby one need never move nor speak again,—had stolen her hand into that of Harold, who, even while returning the pressure of the young girl's fingers, kept his eyes fastened upon Helena's face distinctly visible in the moonlight.

“Emily,” said Helena, on the day succeeding their return, “if we are to have a moon at Capri we must go there to-morrow. Do you feel equal to another expedition? You look a little tired.”

“She has great circles round her eyes, and she seems to me all fagged out,” interposed Mrs. Wyndham. “I don’t believe she is fit to stir another step.”

“Oh! mamma, I am perfectly well,” Emily protested. “It is natural that I should be a little tired to-day, but I shall be all right to-morrow.”

Emily would not acknowledge that she could not learn to sleep in the daytime, that the early rising and late vigils were exhausting her, and the relaxing climate undermining her strength. Like many, perhaps most young people, she feared to curtail one jot of her enjoyment by any confession of weakness, and she had gone on keeping herself up to the level of her companions by sheer effort of will and an immense expenditure of nervous strength.

“Besides,” she continued, as her mother scrutinized her closely, “we have seen every other place by moonlight, just as we were told to do, and I *must* see Capri by moonlight too. Who knows what may happen before next month? And after this there will be nothing more to do.”

Mrs. Wyndham offered a few more objections, but was as usual overruled by her daughter. Helena and Emily and Harold started for Capri with the Naples steamer, Mrs. Wyndham preferring to remain at home.

The deck of the little steamer was crowded with passengers, hilarious Italians out for a holiday and a few groups of more subdued foreigners. A little company of Italian musicians occupied a central position: two men strumming upon a violin and a mandolin, while an elderly man sang comic songs in a cracked baritone, and a young girl with a rich mezzo-soprano voice favored the company with "*Addio, mia bella Napoli,*" and other popular melodies. Venders of coral and tortoise-shell, Sorrento wood-work, silk caps and sashes perambulated the deck, recommending their wares in persuasive tones, and engaging in fierce bargaining with their compatriots.

"Well, they are good-natured," said Harold, as, after accepting six francs instead of twenty for an article, one of these men left a purchaser with a pleasant smile and a '*Tante grazie, signora.*'

“Indeed, they are,” Helena assented; “and the best of it is that if you win a just victory they respect you for it. Even if you buy nothing, they say contentedly, ‘*Sarà per un'altra volta,*’ and continue to smile.”

As Helena finished speaking, a tall, blonde, good-looking man approached her, extending his hand.

“Madame Raimond,” he began, “what a pleasure! I just caught sight of you from the opposite side of the boat. I had no idea of meeting you in these regions.”

“Nor did I dream that you were here. Let me present you to my friends. — Mr. Aarud, Miss Wyndham, Mr. Hart.”

They all bowed, and Harold made room for the new-comer to sit beside them.

“Where have you come from, Mr. Aarud?” asked Helena. “Mr. Aarud is an artist,” she continued, “and a Norwegian, though you would never imagine it. His English is as pure as ours.”

“Oh! madame, you flatter me too much!” exclaimed Mr. Aarud. “Well, I have been in Naples for two or three days, and am on my

way back to Capri. I have been staying there nearly two months."

"I have been still longer in Sorrento," said Helena.

"Why, Madame Raimond, have you deserted Capri for Sorrento? You used to rave about our island."

"I will tell you the reason of my desertion. I came down here tired out and wanting to be alone. There is more 'society' in Capri than in Sorrento, you know, and I know some of the English residents. I could not have remained in concealment there. Besides, although Capri is infinitely preferable for a winter residence, Sorrento is cooler in summer."

"Now you will have to trust yourself to my discretion," said Mr. Aarud, smiling.

"Oh! now the danger is past. There is no one left whom I fear to meet. Where are you staying, Mr. Aarud?"

"I have got another fellow with me,—Svendsen, the composer,—perhaps you remember him. I left him in Naples. He will be awfully sorry not to see you, for I suppose you do not mean to stay?"

“ Oh, no. We have only come over for a day and night.”

“ We have a couple of rooms in that old Convent of Santa Teresa, where they have the Babbington Court in the winter. You remember.”

“ Yes, very well.”

“ Our apartments are large, and there is plenty of room for my traps. Svendsen has had a piano sent from Naples. We came home one day and found it standing there. I don't know how the people brought it up there; on their heads, I suppose, as they bring everything. We take our meals at Pagano's. I suppose you will be going there?”

“ No. I am going to take my friends to the Faraglioni for old association's sake. I stayed there once some time when Pagano's was too full and noisy, and I know the people well. Of course, you are not going into the grotto?”

“ No, nor you either, I fancy.”

“ Yes. I am going to accompany my friends. They have never seen it. They are not such old Italians as you and I, although I have done

my best to convert them into almost as good ones."

"It took very little effort on your part to convert me," said Emily, smiling.

"And I am sure you have broken down all my prejudices and made me an ardent lover of your adopted country," added Harold.

As they approached the entrance of the Blue Grotto, quantities of little boats came out to meet the steamer, clustering around it as it came to anchor. Mr. Aarud assisted his acquaintances to secure one of the first boats; and incited by the promise of an extra fee, the boatman, a smiling, stalwart young fisherman, clothed in picturesque rags, and bareheaded, in spite of the scorching sun, bent with all his might to the oars and sent the little craft spinning in advance of the others.

"Down, down, *signori!*" he cried, as they approached the entrance of the grotto.

Emily crouched beneath the seat of the boat; the other two disposed themselves more comfortably in the stern, in such proximity that their breaths mingled. The boat bumped against the rocks and a slight shower of spray

broke over it. Then came a gurgling of water and an exclamation from the boatman as he stooped hastily in the bows, and the feat was accomplished.

“You may rise, *signori*,” said the boatman, and they resumed their seats.

The sight before them was most beautiful. The walls, roof and watery floor of the large cave glittered as if incrustated with sapphires, and the more accustomed the eye became to the atmosphere, the bluer it appeared.

A murmur of surprise and delight broke from the lips of the visitors.

“Oh!” cried Emily, “how perfectly lovely!”

“I was told I should be disappointed,” said Harold; “but it is quite as wonderful as I expected.”

“*Molto bella, la grotta, oggi, signorina,*” said the boatman, addressing Helena.

“Yes,” she answered, “I have seen it much less striking. It needs a bright blue day and plenty of golden sunshine such as there is now. We are here just at the right time, too.”

“But we shall soon be able to see nothing at all,” remarked a jovial Englishman, whose

boat had entered immediately behind theirs ; “ there are crowds of people at our heels. Here, Giuseppe, Mariano, Giovanni, or whatever your name may be —— ”

“ Paolino, *signore*,” interposed the boatman, smiling and tossing his curly head.

“ Well, Paolino, bring on the rest of the show, that the *signori* may escape before the multitude.”

Paolino made a sign towards a tiny boat lurking in the corner of the grotto ; and its occupants, two small boys, rapidly divesting themselves of their few garments, plunged into the water, beneath which they disported themselves looking very much like antique bronze frogs.

A few minutes later the visitors returned to the steamer, and at the close of another half-hour everyone was landed upon the little Capri pier. This was crowded with women and girls, among whom were a few hotel-porters and the custom-house officers in uniform. Whoever appeared with any luggage in his hands was immediately fallen upon by the girls and women, his bags and wraps were for-

cibly taken from him, while he himself was nearly deafened by offers of service in sharp, treble voices.

“Here, Marianna,” said Mr. Aarud, permitting his portmanteau to be placed upon the head of one woman, while two or three others took possession of the luggage of Helena and her friends; “run and secure the two-horse carriage — if you will allow me to share your carriage,” he continued, turning to his companions.

They were soon driving up the carriage-road, which, winding in loops and curves between the orange and lemon gardens, connects the *Grande Marina*, or principal beach of Capri, with the little town.

“How straight these women are, and how well they walk!” remarked Harold as some peasants crossed the road with loads upon their heads. “Are there always so many of them about?”

“Yes, always,” replied Mr. Aarud. “When I arrived here, four women surrounded me at once. I thought I would have my little joke, so I asked them, “Where are your husbands that they let you do all this hard work?”

“Husbands, *signore!*” one of them tittered; “there are not many husbands here. Those two have no husbands, and ours are over in America.”

“The women on this coast seem to do most of the work,” said Harold.

“Yes; they say that most of the houses in Capri have been built with stones brought on the heads of the women to the place of building. But they seem to thrive fairly well in spite of this condition of things, and I have ceased to distress myself about it.”

At the Hotel Faraglioni the ladies were assigned adjoining rooms on the ground-floor, and after a late lunch Helena persuaded Emily to lie down to rest as usual, promising to call in time for a proposed afternoon ramble.

“Come into my room, Emily,” she said; two hours later, when tapping at the young girl’s door, she found her dressed and waiting. “The view from my window is just a little prettier than from yours.”

Emily followed her friend to the window. Immediately beyond the path beside the house, vineyards and olive-groves sloped downwards

to the sea. Among them, to one side, rose the gray walls of the Certosa or Carthusian monastery, now used as a military prison. Farther to the right, a hill was crowned with the ruins of a mediæval castle, and above and beyond this towered the bold cliffs of Anacapri.

“Each place we see seems in some respects more beautiful than the last,” said Emily, half-sighing. “There is a certain grandeur about this view, quite different from anything we have hitherto seen.”

“This country is a horn of plenty,” said Helena. “It is always pouring out new beauties with a perfect lavishness, and it always seems to be assuring you that there is more behind. I am not sure but that the Villa of Tiberius, where we are going now, is the gem of all this region. I have ordered a donkey for you, Emily. Mr. Hart and I think we can walk.”

“I wish I were as strong as you,” sighed Emily.

“I wish you were, my dear. I have hardly been ill a day in my life, — though I never say so without expecting to be stricken down the

next day. Fate is always waiting round the corner ready to spring upon me."

"Oh! don't say that," cried Emily. "You will make me superstitious, and I have been so happy."

Helena laughed and led the way to the hotel-door, where Harold, the donkey and its driver were awaiting them.

c The ascent to the so-called villa was fatiguing, and, arrived at the ruins of the palace, the friends were glad to accept the chairs offered them by the hermit who presides over a little chapel built upon the site of Tiberius' dwelling, and to sit in silence looking down upon the beautiful familiar sight before them. They waited until the sun had sunk from sight behind Ischia; then, having stopped at the "Salto di Tiberio" — the rock from which Tiberius used to cause offenders to be precipitated into the sea — and having refreshed themselves with a draught of violet-scented Capri wine, they started homeward. Half-way down the hill they met Mr. Aarud coming in search of them.

"I have been to your hotel," he said, "and

they told me you had come up here. You have had a glorious afternoon, except for the heat. I wanted to tell you that the Tarantella is to be danced to-night in Morgano's new hall. It is some German's birthday. You know how much they make of such occasions. They have arranged it with 'Peppino,' and he invited me to come and bring my friends."

"We seem to be always encountering birthdays," said Emily, and she related their experience on their arrival at Sorrento.

"I am glad we have happened upon this birthday, since it is to procure my friends a sight of the Tarantella," said Helena. "I have been hoping they would see it in Sorrento, but there are too few people there now. I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Aarud."

"Do not mention it. I wished they danced in costume, but there is not a shred of a national dress left wherever a railway or a steamboat has penetrated. However, Carmela, one of the dancers, is the beauty of the island, and Carolina, the other one, is very delicate and charming. Besides, you ought to see Morgano and his beautiful wife, — the Signora

Lucia. They own the café 'Zum Kater Hiddigeigei,' named by some German, of course, and are very important people. Morgano transports our luggage, does our errands and gets our money from the Naples banks. I don't know what we should do without him. And he is perfectly honest," he added, impressively. "I wish you had come here sooner, Miss Wyndham, when there was more going on, or that you would stay longer now," continued Mr. Aarud, walking beside Emily's donkey and laying his hand upon its bridle. "Most of us think there is no place like Capri."

"I think sometimes that you would enjoy it more than Sorrento, Mr. Hart," said Helena. "Capri is the paradise of artists. And you might have formed acquaintances that would have been useful to you in the future."

"It is always a paradise where you are," replied Harold in a low tone; "and what society could have compensated me for yours?"

Helena did not reply; for at that moment Mr. Aarud turned, addressing a remark to her.

The party, including Mr. Aarud, dined under the vine-covered trellis on the little *loggia*

upon which Helena's room opened. After dinner Mr. Aarud conducted them to Morgano's. A goodly number of guests were already present, and soon the dancers entered and took their places. The men were neatly dressed in ordinary fishing-garb, the women in full white waists and black bodices, and long colored skirts. Both men and women were barefooted.

An enormously fat woman strummed upon a mandolin, emphasizing her performance now and then by strenuous vocal efforts. The dance began.

The Tarantella consists of several distinct movements or rhythms, and a great deal of suppleness and dexterity is required for an excellent performance. It is intended to express inclination, supplication, coquettish refusal, persistence, pursuit and capture. At one period the man kneels while the woman dances about him, until she throws her handkerchief into his lap as a signal that he may rise. At another, the woman kneels while the man revolves around her until she rises and flings herself into his arms.

After some time the dancers began to shout with excitement, and their motions became more violent.

“Perhaps we had better go,” said Mr. Aarud, “they will be getting a little wild very soon.”

The others assented readily.

Aarud proposed that, as the night was so fine, they should walk to the Punta Tragara, a short distance beyond the Faraglioni Hotel. The others agreed, and Emily found herself leading the way with Mr. Aarud. She felt sure that he did not desire her companionship, yet he seemed to drift continually to her side.

The little refreshment-room at the Punta Tragara was still open, several persons were sitting or standing near the steps; one man was playing upon a mandolin and breaking out now and then into song.

The sea was bathed in floods of moonlight, and a narrow snow-white fringe was visible when the water lapped softly the bases of the great cliffs. An atmosphere of poetry and sensuous beauty enfolded the world.

The new-comers stood leaning against the parapet, listening to the music and watching

the transfigured deep; then they sauntered slowly homewards, over the moon-lit path beneath the olive-trees.

“This scene is too beautiful to leave,” exclaimed Helena. “I really cannot go to bed.”

“You are quite right,” said Emily; “but I am so tired I cannot keep up any longer. If you will excuse me, I will say good-night.”

“You are very wise,” said Helena, kissing her on the cheek; “good-night, my dear.”

Emily gave her hand to Harold, and bowing to Mr. Aarud, passed through Helena’s open door into her own room.

Twenty minutes later, when ready for bed, she missed her watch-key, and immediately remembered that it had dropped from her watch-chain while she was riding to the Villa of Tiberius, and that Harold had picked it up and put it in his pocket. Disliking to be without any means of knowing the hour, although she knew that Helena would call her in the morning in time for an early start, she slipped on her dress over her night-clothes and retraced her steps softly through Helena’s room.

She stopped instinctively at the open *loggia*

door. Aarud was gone. Harold and Helena stood close together, leaning against the parapet.

“Mr. Hart, do you believe in presentiments?” Helena was asking.

“No,” answered Harold. “Why do you ask?”

“Because the first night I saw you, when you took your place opposite me at the table, it was borne in upon me that you were to play a *rôle* in my life.”

“You must always play a *rôle* in the lives of the people you meet when it is your will to do so,” said Harold. “You doubtless divined at once how great would be your influence upon me.”

“No, no, I do not mean that at all,” persisted Helena; “I knew that you were to be a powerful agent in my career. I was as certain of it then as I am now that it is coming true.”

“Well, I will tell you,” said Harold slowly; “if I have little faith in presentiments, I believe in spells. You have laid a spell upon me. I see through your eyes, I feel with your perceptions, I live and breathe as you ordain.”

“Yet you are always contradicting me,” objected Helena; “always taking the opposite side in every discussion.”

“That is only the last futile resistance of the intellect; the soul is captive. — I will make a confession to you,” Harold continued, bending yet closer over her; “it dates also from the first night of our meeting. Do you remember my urging Mrs. Wyndham to come to the dance? I did it because you had already laid a spell upon me; because I wanted to be near you, to look upon you, to dance with you — in the dance at least to hold you in my arms. It was a misty, half-unconscious desire; everything has been misty and half-unconscious in my mind till now. Now the light is beginning to break in upon me. Now ——”

He spoke as one awaking from a dream.

Emily had tried to turn and fly, but she was as if rooted to the spot. She could not choose but hear, though Harold's words fell upon her heart like the strokes of a keen-edged knife. It was as if a thunder-bolt had fallen from a perfectly serene sky. In one instant her confidence, her glad security, her peace, her happi-

ness lay in ruins. She leaned against the wall for support, but she ground her teeth together and uttered no sound.

As Harold paused, a heavy step was heard along the corridor leading to the *loggia*, and Aarud appeared at the farther door.

Helena moved a step or two away from the parapet, and Harold uttered an impatient exclamation.

“I have had my talk with your *padrone*,” said Aarud in a cheerful tone, obtusely unconscious of intrusion; and I just came back to say that I will have the carriage ready for you at six o’clock. It gets so beastly hot, later, you know. When we get back, Mme. Raimond, we must take your friends into Pagano’s to see the pictures. I wish I could ask you to my place, but it is in such horrible confusion.”

“Oh, we should not like to trouble you. You are very kind as it is,” Helena answered.

“Capri looks like some Eastern village in this moonlight,” said Aarud, advancing to the parapet, while Emily drew back into the concealment of the curtain. “I say, isn’t it glorious? One ought not to close one’s eyes on a night like this.”

“Nevertheless, I shall have to send you gentlemen away now,” said Helena. “It is long past midnight, and ‘there comes a morrow,’ — unfortunately perhaps.”

Emily saw Aarud bow over Helena’s hand, saw Harold raise that hand to his lips and imprint upon it a lingering kiss. Then she turned, fled swiftly across the room and closed her door without a sound.

CHAPTER VII.

“THE JULY NIGHT.”

BEFORE six o'clock on the following morning Helena knocked at Emily's door and was bidden to enter.

“Here is a cup of coffee for you, Emily,” she said; “they brought it all to my room. How nice of you to be all ready! Why, child!” she exclaimed, in a tone of deep concern, as Emily turned her haggard face upon her. “What is the matter with you? Are you ill?”

A bitter smile played for an instant about Emily's mouth as she looked upon the radiant creature before her, — fresh and calm as the morning, and looking at that moment the

younger of the two. But bitterness faded rapidly before intense weariness and abject wretchedness. She sat down upon the bedside and burst into tears. Helena's mind reverted instantly to her conversation with Harold on the previous evening; but she soon decided that Emily could not possibly have overheard it, and that her present state was due to her general nervous and exhausted condition.

"There, there, dear," she said, seating herself beside Emily and putting her arm affectionately about the young girl's neck. "Tell me what is the matter. Do you feel ill? What will your mother say to us?"

"I shall be better by-and-by," replied Emily, striving to restrain her tears and withdrawing slightly from her friend's embrace. "I could not sleep. Perhaps it was the strange bed,—it was not very comfortable,—or I was too tired."

"Had we not better give up going to Anacapri? The young men can go by themselves. I am afraid it is too much for you."

"No, no," cried Emily; "don't say anything, I don't want Harold to know. Perhaps he will not notice."

Emily's one clear idea was the desire to excite no suspicion of her fatal knowledge. In spite of the misery she endured, she was capable of little resentment against her friends. Recognizing to the full Helena's irresistible fascination, she hardly accused her of having exercised it deliberately or blamed her lover for having yielded to it. It was, as he had said, a spell, a fatality. She had no strength of pride or indignation with which to meet the blow. She was simply crushed.

In this mood she permitted Helena to give her her coffee and to brush her hair; then she bathed her eyes, and the two young women went forth to meet Mr. Aarud and Harold.

Harold did observe Emily's altered appearance, but, being in a mood of unnatural, excited gaiety, was willing enough to accept her explanation of a sleepless night and over-fatigue. Emily herself made strenuous efforts to recover her outward composure, succeeding to an extent that was really extraordinary in one of her age and temperament.

It is difficult to describe the exquisite beauty

of the morning upon the southern Italian coast in the summer-time. A soft film lies upon the hillsides, veils the islands and the Naples shore, and rests, like a breath upon a mirror, over the delicately-tinted surface of the sea. The sun's rays, already powerful at six o'clock, gild the foliage of the trees and kiss open the flower-cups that hold their heads erect, refreshed and beautified by the cool moisture of the night. The smoke of Vesuvius rises like a pillar into the sky; below the cone, the mountain is wreathed with cloud. After a time a gentle breeze rises, blowing away the mist and rippling the waters of the bay.

"It makes me think of the creation," said Mr. Aarud as they were driving up the Anacapri Road. "It looks as if everything had been made anew last night while we slept."

"So, you see, sleep has its uses, after all, as I can testify to my cost," said Emily, with a faint smile.

Their ~~AA~~ driver who, as usual, had permitted a "brother," wishing to reach Anacapri, to occupy the vacant seat on the box — informed

his *inglesi* that he had another brother who owned a fine sail-boat, and who would be glad to convey the *signori* back to Sorrento that afternoon. He was sure there would be a good breeze, and if not, they would have four men and could be rowed across.

“What do you say, Mr. Hart?” asked Helena. “We could start late, and it would give Emily a good chance to rest this afternoon. Perhaps we could carry her back to her mother in rather better condition. Besides, it will be much cooler than if we take the steamer at half past two.”

Harold and Emily agreed that it would be an agreeable change of programme, and Mr. Aarud promised to go down to the beach to inspect the boat and to make sure that everything was comfortable and in readiness for their departure.

Accordingly, they let the steamboat start without them, and towards six o'clock, with Aarud waving *adieux* from the pier, they pushed off from the Capri sands in their own boat, with four rowers and a boy at the helm.

They were pulled straight out beyond the

horns of the land, and then the sails were hoisted. A light but somewhat squally breeze was blowing and the boat rose and fell on short though not violent waves. Harold and Helena were in the stern. Emily insisted on sitting farther forward in the boat where she could lean over the side and, as the boat plunged, trail her fingers in the cool water. The others had been especially considerate of her throughout the day, and now they offered no opposition to her fancy. She seemed better since her afternoon rest, and their anxiety concerning her was allayed. Their mood became very gay, stimulated by the rapid motion, the songs of the sailors, and their merry shouts, "*Allegr! Allegr! la signorina vuol arrivar!*"

They were half way across when the order was given to put the boat about.

"You must move, *signorina*," cried the skipper, "we are going to tack." One of the other men loosened the sail as he spoke.

"Emily, Emily," called Harold, "go over to the other side."

Emily appeared not to hear. She was lean-

ing far over the side of the boat gazing into the water.

Both Harold and the skipper sprang towards her ; but as they did so, a gust struck the boat, the sailor holding the sheet let it fly from his hand, and the little vessel gave a sudden lurch. There were two or three quick plunges, and a confusion of flapping sail, and when the boat was righted, Emily had disappeared.

“ *Accidente,*” exclaimed the skipper through his teeth, as with one vigorous pull he tore the sail from the mast.

“ Take to your oars,” he shouted, “ and keep the boat steady. *La stupida,*” he muttered angrily as he hastily stripped off his outer garments. “ Don’t be frightened,” he cried to Helena and Harold, who were both ashy pale.

Harold had tried to throw himself overboard in search of Emily, but Helena had retained him by a firm clasp.

“ You can do no good,” she said quickly ; “ that man dives like a fish. — Do you not ? ” repeating her speech in Italian.

“ *Si, signora,*” answered the skipper, pulling

off his shoes. I will have her up in a minute; don't be afraid." And once more admonishing the men to "keep her steady," he plunged into the water.

Once his head emerged alone; but in another moment he reappeared on the other side of the boat, bearing Emily's dripping form in his arms. He and his burden were pulled into the boat, the sail was hoisted and set, and they were soon skimming over the bay once more.

The whole incident had hardly lasted as long as it has taken to describe it. Emily had been immersed but for a moment, and as soon as the water had run out of her nose and mouth she opened her eyes.

"If you only do not take cold!" exclaimed Helena, wiping the water from Emily's face and hair with a handkerchief. "There is no use in taking off anything, since you cannot be undressed properly. You must lie down in the bottom of the boat and we will put over you all we have. Fortunately the air is warm."

A rough blanket was produced from a

cubby in the bows, and half reclining upon, half wrapped in that, Emily lay, covered besides with what wraps and outer garments they had brought with them.

“How could you be so careless, Emily?” asked Harold severely. Now that the fright was over, his principal feeling was one of irritation. “Nothing but the grossest carelessness could have led to the accident.”

The sailors seemed to take this view also.

There was a good deal of low talking and muttering among them, and then the skipper stepped towards his passengers.

“We think, *signore*, that in consideration of the fright and the delay, and the wetting I have had, we ought to have an extra *buona mano*,” he said, looking keenly from one to the other.

“You shall have twenty francs,” returned Harold, “and I will give the others a franc apiece more than was agreed upon, though I don’t see what they have done to deserve it.”

“We are all companions,” said the man, with a deprecatory gesture. “*Grazie, signore.*”

Towards sunset, the wind died away, and the

men took to their oars, pulling silently and steadily. The ruffled feelings of the whole company were soothed by the influence of the hour and scene. Before them lay the table-land of Sorrento, — a semi-circular space inclosed by hills, along whose slopes little villages nestle among the luxuriant olive-groves. Here and there a church-tower or the long walls of a monastery visible among the other buildings. Along the shore, surrounded by orange-gardens, stood the bright-colored villas and hotels on the edge of walls of rock rising in a perpendicular line from the sea. Vesuvius stood purple in the sunset light, a thin column of smoke issuing from its summit. The west was gorgeous with gold and purple clouds, from which the blood-red disc of the sun detached itself as it dropped towards the horizon. The sea, now calm again, was no longer sapphire-hued, but opal-tinted — delicate pinks and blues, yellows and violets blending with each other till the whole bay resembled a rainbow-colored shell. The peaks of the higher hills behind Sorrento were tinged with pink. Gradually the varied colors faded

away into a delicate uniform blue, and dusk had already fallen when the travellers landed on the Sorrento shore.

The sailors carried Emily in their arms up the steep ascent to the piazza and placed her in a carriage.

“We have earned our franc now, *signore*,” said one of the men, turning to Harold with such a winning smile that no one could have refrained from smiling in return.

In consequence of the lateness of the hour, Mrs. Wyndham had abandoned all expectation of the party’s return that evening, and was calmly eating her dinner when they reached the Cocumella. Harold hastened to the dining-room to inform her of the accident while Helena assisted Emily to climb the stairs, followed by the cook, the chambermaid and various children and female adjuncts of the establishment.

A little later, Mrs. Wyndham came rushing to the bedroom she and Emily shared together, as fast as her unwieldy proportions would permit.

“Good heavens!” she cried, throwing her

arms round her daughter's neck; "how did this ever happen? I shall never dare to let you out of my sight again if people cannot take care of you any better."

"Nobody is to blame but myself, mamma," said Emily. "It was my own carelessness. If I had paid attention, it would not have happened."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! You will be sick, I know you will. We must send for the doctor directly."

"Nonsense, mamma, I am not going to be ill, and I am not going to have a doctor. I only want to get off my wet things and lie down," declared Emily, whom Helena was already divesting of her outer garments.

The room was cleared of the superfluous women and the young girl undressed, rubbed and put to bed. Helena, who had disappeared for a few moments, returned, followed by Josephine carrying a bowl of beef-tea from Helena's private sources. Emily drank it with some effort, and then sinking back upon the pillow signified her desire to be quiet.

"Good-night," said Helena; "I hope we

shall find to-morrow that all this has done you no harm.”

Emily made no reply. Helena, stooping over the bed, kissed her gently on the cheek.

“ I will come and see how she is a little later,” she said as she turned to leave the room. “ Now I must repair my own disorder,” she concluded, looking at her skirts, which were wet and stained with salt water.

Half an hour later she tapped gently at Mrs. Wyndham’s door. Harold, who had been walking up and down the corridor waiting for her appearance, joined her. Presently Mrs. Wyndham came out, closing the door behind her.

“ Well ? ” asked Helena and Harold in a breath.

“ She is perfectly quiet,” the old lady answered ; “ she seems to have gone to sleep. Oh ! I do hope we shall escape with nothing worse than this fright. You must not mind what I said about your not taking care of her. Of course, I did not mean it ; but one is so flurried and anxious, you know, one does not know what one says. Still, it was very wrong

of me when you have been so kind and done all you could for us all along." Mrs. Wyndham's voice faltered a little as she finished speaking.

Helena laid her hand upon the other lady's hand.

"Dear Mrs. Wyndham," she said kindly; "do not say another word. Of course, I understand. I have arranged with the *padrona* to let Josephine sleep in the room adjoining yours to-night, and if Emily is worse,— which Heaven forbid! — or if you want anything, you need only speak to her. She will call me if you should need me, and she will let me know in the morning how things are."

"That is kind of you!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham gratefully. "That makes it ever so much easier for me. Now, don't let me detain you any longer. You must want your dinner badly enough, both of you. You look as if you were going to a party, Mrs. Raimond, and so does Harold, too, for that matter."

"I had to change my clothes," said Harold, blushing slightly, "they were half drenched."

"Why, of course! I am not finding any

fault. Besides, it is Mrs. Raimond who is so particularly fine.”

Helena was indeed somewhat strikingly attired in a cloud of white muslin and lace with skirts that swept the ground. The sleeves fell only to the elbow, and her beautiful shoulders were covered but by a film of lace and muslin. A tea-rose was fastened in her hair, and a cluster of roses lay among the mazes of lace upon her breast.

“It is so warm I wanted to wear something thin,” she said quietly, “and Josephine had nothing but this ready for me. She is growing very lazy here with nothing to do.”

“I always thought a maid would be more bother than she was worth,” remarked Mrs. Wyndham; “but they are good for some things sometimes. I am glad enough for yours to-night. I cannot help feeling anxious about Emily. Well, I really must not keep you another minute. Thank you again a thousand times. Do not come back again, Harold; there is no need of it, and I shall go to bed now myself.”

They all shook hands; — Mrs. Wyndham

re-entered her room, and Helena and Harold repaired to the dining-room.

“You do not think Emily is really going to be ill?” Harold asked, with some anxiety, as they seated themselves at the table.

“No, I trust not; the water was not cold. She is very tired. She needs a good rest.”

“Her falling in was so silly, so unnecessary,” continued Harold; “I cannot help feeling provoked about it.”

“That is so like a man. When anything happens, — at least anything which might possibly have been avoided, — they feel such resentment that they usually begin to scold instead of sympathizing.”

“Perhaps you are right,” said Harold, laughing.

His mind being relieved, the subject of Emily's condition was dismissed, and he and his companion fell again into the mood of overstrained gaiety which they had exhibited at intervals all day.

Neither of them had much appetite, and the dinner soon came to an end. Helena pushed back her chair.

“Shall we go to the party now?” she asked, smiling, “or should you say that it had begun already?”

“It has been ‘a party’ all day for me,” answered Harold. “Indeed, you make a festival of everything, wherever we go. But if you are ready, I should like to get out of doors again. To-night one realizes that one is in the south.”

“Let us go, then,” said Helena, leading the way.

On the terrace, where chairs had been placed for them, Josephine served coffee.

“Now I call this pleasant,” said Helena, sipping the fragrant beverage. “I like a combination of intellectual and material enjoyment. It is nice to be just tired enough to appreciate a comfortable chair and a cup of coffee, yet fresh enough not to lose any of the effect of this heavenly view.”

“I never knew what paradise meant till I came here,” sighed Harold. “I think we must be slow to learn at home.”

“And then our crowning night, — the July night,” quoted Helena, under her breath.

“What did you say?” asked Harold.

His companion did not reply.

Josephine came to take the cups.

“You may go to bed,” said her mistress, “I shall not want you any more to-night.”

“Ah! you mention the word bed,” exclaimed Harold, ruefully. “It is very early; surely, you will not send me away yet?”

“No, no; do not go,” Helena replied, eagerly extending her hand as if to detain him, and making a movement which brought her chair nearer his. “Did you ever see a more perfect night? Where could one find anything like this on northern shores?”

It would have been uncomfortably warm but for a light breeze which now and then rustled the leaves of the grape-vines and stirred gently the branches of the orange and olive trees, though it was not powerful enough to affect the tall pine-trees, standing immovable like warders of the land.

In the clear sky the thickly clustered stars hung like jewels, the evening-star — shining with a brighter, purer radiance than the rest — casting a long, golden trail across the quiet

sea. The late moon had not yet climbed above the hills. The luminous line of the Naples lamps glittered on the opposite coast. Vesuvius stood dark and mysterious — a restless glow on its summit, and to one side showing where a stream of lava was issuing from its crater and pouring down its flank. The orange trees had long since shed their blossoms and the new fruit had begun to form; but now, instead of the intoxicating fragrance of the orange-flowers, the air was freighted with the strong odor of the young grapes and the perfume of the late sweet-scented garden-plants. In the intervals, when the breeze ceased to rustle the leaves about them, the two friends on the terrace could hear the ripple of the water on the little beach below. Now and then the sound of a mandolin and an accompanying voice floated towards them from some distant point.

But to Harold this calm was full of unrest, this silence like the prophetic hush preceding a thunder-storm. All day long something had been in the air, — something that now was shaping itself into a tangible form in his mind.

His brain reeled with the weight of the thought that arose in it. His veins seemed filled with liquid fire. His gaze turned from the enchanting scene before him and fastened upon the woman at his side. In her he recognized the incarnation of his heart's desire.

Suddenly he uttered an excited exclamation, and, moved by a resistless impulse, he leaned towards Helena, thrust aside, almost roughly, the veiling lace, and pressed his lips upon her shoulder. Then terrified, ashamed of his own brutality, he drew back, murmuring broken words of apology, awaiting, with bowed head, the withering rebuke that must follow. But for a moment he heard nothing. A slight shiver passed over Helena. Her eyes wore a triumphant expression and a faint smile hovered about her mouth.

In the revulsion of feeling which her silence caused the young man, the blood that had seemed to stand still in its channels during a brief moment of remorse and fear, rushed in a great tide all over him, flushing scarlet his face and neck. He strove to speak, but emotion choked his utterance.

He waited, breathless, expectant.

The trail of the star grew faint, disappeared in a flood of light. The moon had emerged from the barrier of the hills. Then — like a cry of longing, like a pæan of victory, in the increasing moonlight — a word smote the silence of the night, — a word that seemed to fill the air and be re-echoed from the earth. The pine-trees whispered it to each other, the orange-trees tossed it to the olive-trees. It was repeated in the rustle of the vines, written in golden characters in the heavens, reflected on the bosom of the sea. In letters of flame it burned before Harold’s eyes; like a strain of unearthly music, it penetrated his brain; — one word: “COME.”

In another instant he was in Helena’s arms. And still the vines moved softly and the trees nodded to each other. Still the waves came on to kiss the shore and the stars shone peacefully in the sky as if they were looking down upon the sealing of a pure and righteous bond, instead of one founded on treachery and deceit.

CHAPTER VIII.

MENTAL STRUGGLES.

ON the following morning, Helena awoke before the dawn. Her heart was filled with an unutterable content. Her eyes shone with a new light. The flush of sleep and joy tinged her usually colorless cheek. A smile lit up her features. Her hair, all unbraided, rippled over the pillows, lying upon the linen like a second Golden-fleece.

For a long time she remained motionless, recalling, in imagination, each detail of the previous evening's experience. Over and over again, she repeated softly to herself the words Harold had uttered. Once more his accents seemed to caress her ear. She felt the press-

ure of his arms about her, — the touch of his lips upon her own. In the measure of her bliss there was no recollection of Emily, nor any alloy of remorse. In some natures the first flood of a sincere passion sweeps away all considerations foreign to itself. It is only when the after-tide of reflection sets in that such natures begin to hesitate, to regard the consequences, to weigh the right and wrong. Besides, what, to a woman of Helena's temperament and education, were the ties which bound her lover or the claims of others on herself? She, whose emotional life had been frittered away in a series of caprices and flirtations, in which there had been no real food for her soul, *loved* now for the first time. Everything was forgotten in the new absorbing feeling which seemed to bear within itself its own justification.

The exultation of her mood became too great to bear in inaction. She rose, thrust her feet into slippers, wrapped herself in a light morning-dress, and, passing through the parlor, went out upon the terrace.

The world seemed still half asleep. No one was stirring on the premises. The silence of

the morning was unbroken, save for the call of the swallows as they darted through the air, describing now wider, now narrower circles in their swift flight. A dull light rested like a veil upon all objects. In this light the olive-trees gleamed white and spectral amid the other foliage. A few cold-looking clouds lay on the horizon. Nowhere was there any trace of pink such as often heralds the dawn.

But as Helena watched and waited, the gray tone of the landscape gradually vanished. It was as if a hand were withdrawing slowly the curtain covering some valuable picture. A luminous spot in the east above the hills grew brighter and brighter. Dazzling rays shot upwards into the sky. Then the all-seeing Eye peered, in a halo, over the mountain's rim, — the day awoke. "Thus," she said to herself, "had the sun of love arisen upon her life." Her past seemed waste and arid in the light of this rich and full and thrilling day. As she gazed, it seemed to her that a stream, as of many waters, passed over her soul, cleansing it of its stains. She was filled with humility and trembling gladness. Her eyes grew dim with

grateful tears. She could have prayed had she known to whom or what. She stretched out her arms and folded them again upon her bosom, as if in that clasp she held the beloved form, —

“O Thou Source of light and power! Heart of the universe! Spirit of love! who or what-e'er thou art — if Thou consciously existest and canst hear the broken words we utter, I thank Thee for this hour,” she said.

The morning breeze, rising, stirred the foliage of the trees below her and beat the vines against the trellis-work. It seemed like the echo of her own thanksgiving in which nature was joining.

But the cool air, blowing upon her thinly-clad figure, caused her to shiver. She re-entered the house. Just then the bell of the adjoining chapel began to ring, reminding her that it was Sunday morning. Almost at the same moment Josephine appeared at the *salon* door.

“What is the matter?” cried Helena; “is Miss Emily worse?”

“I do not think so, madame; they have not

called me, and I have not heard them stirring. I came to arrange the room. I thought madame would sleep late this morning and I should finish before she rose."

"No, I can sleep no more," said Helena; "you may prepare my bath here — I shall not go down to the beach to-day."

Josephine assisted her mistress to perform an especially careful toilette, for Helena desired to render herself as fair as possible in the eyes of him she loved.

"Madame is very beautiful to-day," remarked Josephine approvingly as Helena scrutinized her appearance in the mirror.

Robed in pure white, without an ornament, except at her throat a single rose that had been a bud the evening before and had blossomed during the night, Helena looked like a young girl. Any one, meeting her for the first time, might have ascribed to her twenty years rather than the thirty-five she counted.

Her beauty had often worn a more regal aspect, never one so winning.

In the meantime, Harold's state of mind was far different from that of the woman for

whom he had conceived such a violent and bewildering passion. Divided between the intoxication of a brief possession and a remorse which all his tumultuous emotion could not stifle, he had not closed his eyes, save in a sort of lethargy which had fallen upon him when the morning was well advanced. All through the night his room seemed peopled with shapes and images, now beautiful, now fearful to behold. Sometimes Helena appeared to stand beside his pillow, with eager countenance and outstretched arms. Sometimes, Emily's face, pale, reproachful, floated in the air. He rose at last as weary and exhausted as if he had been engaged in a severe, physical contest, half-resolved to throw himself upon Helena's generosity; to appeal to her against herself.

She had been expecting him for some time, when his step sounded in the corridor outside her door.

"Come in," she said in an unsteady voice, in answer to his knock.

The young man entered.

The first meeting of any two persons after a powerful explosion of feeling, is often embar-

rassing, generally decisive of the future. Will the "colors seen by candle-light look the same by day?" Can the threads be taken up where they were dropped; may the poem's next strophe be repeated? Or are the tints grown confused and dull? Has the skein become tangled, the musical measure broken and forgotten? Helena, made humble by love, now felt a sudden dread of the reaction that might have swept over her lover. He looked pale and haggard. As her glance rested on him, a shadow fell upon her morning joy: her heart turned cold within her.

A flush overspread Harold's face as he met Helena's eyes, before which his own dropped like a guilty person's. For an instant, neither could speak; but Helena recovered herself quickly.

"Good-morning, dear," she said simply, advancing towards him with extended hands.

The gentle tone of her voice came like a drop of balm to the young man's over-burdened heart. Tears, which were full of relief, gathered in his eyes. In the mist that veiled his sight the vision of his fault was for the

moment obscured. He took Helena into his arms and kissed her eyes and lips. "My love," he whispered, "how sweet! how beautiful you are!"

"Darling!" she answered passionately as she laid her head upon his breast.

A light tap at the door caused them to spring from each other's embrace.

It was Josephine again.

"Pardon, madame," she said, "but it seems after all that Miss Emily is ill. They have sent for the doctor, and Madame Wyndham wishes to know if you will be kind enough to come and interpret for her."

"Certainly, I will come directly. — I wonder what this means," she continued, turning to Harold. "I had no idea Emily would be really ill. I thought her only fatigued."

"Yes, you said so — last night. Helena, you do not suppose that I — that she — that we have this to answer for?"

But Helena was already leaving the room.

She did not reply, nor did he repeat his question as he followed her in the direction of Mrs. Wyndham's apartment.

Helena found Mrs. Wyndham agitated and alarmed. Emily had passed a restless night and had awaked in a high fever. Mrs. Wyndham had lost no time in sending for the doctor before summoning Helena herself.

The doctor arrived speedily, — a white-haired man with a red nose that seemed to betray an intimacy with the products of the Sorrento vines. He was dressed with scrupulous neatness, and wore dark-green gloves, one of which he removed to feel the patient's pulse.

Having terminated his examination of the young girl, he proceeded glibly to acquaint Helena with his conclusions.

“The *signora*,” with a wave of the hand towards Mrs. Wyndham, “need feel no alarm.” The *signorina* was not so very ill. As this *signora*, to whom he had the honor of speaking, doubtless knew, in his country some fever accompanied almost every form of disease. This was merely a case of prostration. The *signorina* had over-taxed her strength. Repose and the remedies he should prescribe would restore her within a short time. Then, having written his prescriptions and given

certain orders which Helena translated to Mrs. Wyndham, he rose to go, casting at the same time such a significant glance at Helena that she followed him from the room.

“Of course, I do not know; but it seems to me,” said the shrewd physician, closing the door behind them, “that some mental anxiety may have contributed to produce the *signorina’s* malady. I hear she is engaged to be married.” (Of course, the Wyndhams’ entire history, or as much of it as was known, had been imparted to Dr. Agostino, by the messenger sent to fetch him.) “Well, I advise you to keep the lover out of the way, for the present. I repeat: the case is not serious, but excitement must be avoided. I trust to you, dear lady, to see that my orders are obeyed.”

“What more did he say?” inquired Mrs. Wyndham anxiously opening the door again as she heard the doctor’s departing step.

“Nothing new,” was the reply. “That there is no danger, that she must be kept as quiet as possible, and had better see only you and me, — not even Mr. Hart, for the present.”

To Harold, to whom Helena had repeated the doctor's injunctions, judiciously suppressing his suspicion of "some mental anxiety," Emily's illness, when he found that it was not of an alarming character, came almost as a relief. By it he was spared the reproach of her presence, spared also the acting of a part. He should gain time, he told himself, — time to consider his present position, to decide what measures it behooved him to take for the future.

All along he had intended no disloyalty to Emily. It had not occurred to him until very lately that he was falling in love with another woman. To him, as to Emily herself, Helena had seemed almost as a creature of another sphere; — whose superior wisdom rendered doubly delightful and profitable the hours passed in her society. He had rejoiced in her beauty as an artist may in that which is without blemish. He, like Emily herself, had felt the full force of her fascination; like Emily, he had conceived for her a sort of adoration, as for "something afar from the sphere of our sorrow;" but that these feelings

were leading to a more intimate, personal one, or that Helena could regard him as other than a tolerable companion, had not crossed his mind. Helena's increasing warmth of manner towards him, he had ascribed to her natural kindness and to the freedom from restraint induced by constant companionship. When suddenly a strange convulsion had swept over his heart and "the light had begun to break in upon him," even then perhaps the sentiment might have been stifled or at least disavowed and finally overcome, had not the force of circumstances, Emily's absence and Helena's temptation of him, combined to bring things to a crisis.

But if, with effort, one can push away an untasted cup, how much more difficult is it to remove it from the lips when the first draught has been quaffed. His whole being thirsted for more. On the other hand, in spite of a brief frenzy, one does not break easily with the habits of thought which have for years been the guide to conduct. Harold abhorred his own treachery. He had fallen from his former estate of truth and honor, but he despised him-

self for having fallen. He was tormented by remorse for the lie his life had become. Besides, there were moments when it did not seem to him that he loved Emily less because he loved Helena more. The passion he felt for Helena was so different from anything Emily had ever inspired in him that his sentiment towards the latter might have been called unchanged. That Helena was free, it did not occur to him to doubt. In spite of Mrs. Wyndham's original scepticism, the fact of her widowhood had been generally accepted. Not that she had ever distinctly affirmed it, but she had tacitly allowed it to be inferred. If Raimond were alive, his wife's whole conduct and bearing would have been different, Harold believed. He gave Helena credit for a sincerity equal with his own. He was both wrong and right. She was perfectly sincere in her love for him, but she had read his heart better than he himself had read it. She had known for a long time that he loved her, but had been content to wait, doing nothing to hasten any avowal until the fitting moment came: at that moment regarding nothing but the bliss

of loving and being loved. But Harold, in the whole course of his simple existence, had never even imagined such an entanglement as the present. He stood lost and bewildered between the conflicting demands on his conscience and heart. On one side were loyalty to his word and the tie of years; on the other, Helena's late-born, imperious claim. To leave Emily was to bring distress upon her, shame upon himself. To break with Helena was to lay upon his soul a burden greater, it seemed to him, than he could bear. Often he told himself that he was not worthy of Emily's affection; yet how could he bear to confess to her that he was no longer the man whom she had loved? Sometimes he believed that his moral vision, his strength of purpose would return to him could he but fly from Helena's influence; but flight was not only cowardly but impossible. At other times he acknowledged to himself that she had the strongest right to a voice in whatever decision he should make, and again he determined to trust to her generosity and seek from her aid and counsel. But in Helena's presence such resolutions vanished.

The charm she exercised was too complete to be broken. Then he called himself weak and childish. Why could he not accept, as so many others would have done, without an after-thought, the happiness that lay within his grasp? Yet he could not. Hardly did he leave Helena's side when the old remorse returned. The goads of conscience were not lightened by becoming habitual.

A great restlessness came upon him. The hours he could not pass in Helena's society were spent in roaming aimlessly about the country. He neither read nor painted. The portrait was laid aside.

Helena herself was always present at the doctor's visits to Emily. She did what she could to relieve Mrs. Wyndham; but Emily's manner showed her that the young girl preferred to be left alone with her mother.

At the close of a fortnight Emily was permitted to sit up for an hour. Then, for the first time, she insisted on seeing Harold. Helena, at Emily's request, was present at the interview. During the long hours passed upon her bed the young girl had had opportunity for reflec-

tion. She seemed to herself to have grown very old in these two weeks. She felt confident of her ability to judge of the present relations of her friend and her lover, if this were still an appropriate title, when they should be brought together in her presence. Her manner, as she greeted Harold, was very calm. His was confused and agitated. Helena appeared unembarrassed and at ease, talking in her usual pleasant manner.

The interview was a short one. At its close, when Emily had returned to bed and was left alone, having persuaded her mother to go down to dinner for the first time since her illness, she wept bitterly. The change in Harold was even more marked than she had feared. Yet now, as at the time of her discovery, she felt little bitterness towards her lover, little towards the woman who had robbed her of his heart. Resentment and anger had little place in Emily's breast. She had by nature a humble opinion of herself, and her admiration of Helena was so complete that she could well appreciate the fascination she must exercise over others. Helena was brilliant, beautiful,

endowed with every grace and talent; possessing, besides, that inexplicable, never-to-be-acquired, inborn charm which is stronger than all the attractions of genius or education. She herself was only an ignorant young creature, with no remarkable attribute, either of mind or person, no recommendation save a desire to learn, and a heart overflowing with good-will. It was easy to see where a choice between her and Helena would lie. It was only natural that Harold should swerve from his loyalty to her. Perhaps it was only natural that Helena should care for him. He, too, was talented and beautiful. They were fitted for each other. "Yet she might have left him for me," cried poor Emily; "she who has everything might have left me my one treasure. What have I done that I should suffer so?" she repeatedly asked herself, struggling blindly with that blindest of problems, — the "wherefore?" of human fate. Her cheerful philosophy had vanished. The present seemed all the harder to bear because the past had been so bright. During her illness she had almost hoped that she should die. That would be the simplest

solution of the difficulties she foresaw. But now she was recovering. If, as she believed, Harold had ceased to love her, sooner or later there must come some explanation between them. Well, she would endeavor to accept whatever burden he might lay upon her, but she could not go to meet it. She could give him no aid. When the break came, it must come from him alone.

Day after day went by. Her convalescence was very slow. She hastened her recovery by no effort of her will. What would returning health bring to her? Her hope was broken, her life become a desert place. Like all young people, Emily believed that no trial had ever equalled this one imposed on her; imagined, in perfect sincerity, that neither time nor circumstance could heal the wound inflicted on her heart.

In the meanwhile, Helena — perhaps partially divining also the tormented condition of Emily's mind — was painfully aware of the struggle taking place in her lover's breast. She was not ungenerous. Her former victims had walked, open-eyed, into the net of her seduction.

Perhaps they had even fancied themselves the conquerors, believed that she succumbed to their fascinations. But now the case was wholly different. Knowing from the first whither she and her young companion were drifting, she had indeed done little to hasten the *denouement*, but neither had she done anything to arrest the tide of events. She had, however, made one horrible miscalculation, or rather she had not realized in time the innocence of the man with whom she had to deal. Not until within these last few days had she fully appreciated the guilelessness of his heart. At sight of the young man's unhappiness at his own error, far smaller than hers, she recognized a degree of high-mindedness, conscientious feeling, simple goodness, which she had not believed to exist in a human soul. And Harold's misery was caused by remorse for his treachery towards Emily, and by the knowledge of a fault he still believed reparable. What would it be when she should make the terrible revelation that she was not free to become his? Some words Harold had once uttered sounded in her memory like the knell of doom. "I hope I can

forgive and condone a great many faults, but I cannot pardon deceit in any form." In these words lay her condemnation. True, under her influence he had turned from the upright path. True, the glamor she exercised over him was so intense that she felt certain, if she confessed the plain truth, relating to him the circumstances of her life and education, reassuring him of her love for him, he would forgive her everything. His pity and pardon would add another element to their bond, insuring its permanence. He might remain near her: one follower, more or less, in her train, would excite no special comment in the world in which she moved. There would still be opportunity for a sort of stolen bliss. But, if she succeeded in chaining Harold to her side, his whole nature would, she knew now, revolt against his position. Yet parting from her, he would carry away a regret which would embitter his whole career. Pitying, pardoning, still loving her, she was sure he would never forget her. Even if he afterwards married Emily, he would bring to his wife only a divided heart. For the moment the thought of divorce rose before her,

but it was soon dismissed. She was not sufficiently familiar with the laws of France to know whether such a means of escape from her situation were possible ; and if it were, she knew that Harold would be the first to shrink, for her, from the publicity it involved. She had no other hope. Raimond might almost be called in the prime of life. He was not over fifty-five, robust and vigorous like most men the early part of whose lives has been spent in the country in the open air. She had a firm conviction that he would reappear some day with a second fortune, able in some way to retrieve the past and begin a new career. He was a man of successes, possessing a large individual share of the aggregate elasticity of his native land. The golden vision of a life in which her culture and experience should develop and complete all the latent possibilities of Harold's talent and character, while the sweetness and delicacy of his nature refreshed and purified her weary soul, had flashed for an instant before her mind, only to fade into utter darkness. It could not be, — no, it could not be ; but how she hated the galling chains that

bound her! What now was the pride of intellect, what the enjoyments of the senses, the almost arrogant appreciation of nature and art, compared with her baffled aspiration towards a pure and healthful life? Helena groaned in spirit. "I have done nothing for the man I love but sully his white soul," she cried. — "His white soul," she repeated to herself. How she envied him his possession! Yet, perhaps, it was not too late. Perhaps she could still save him from himself as well as from her. His uprightness might become her weapon against herself. She would let him believe that she had deceived him, not only regarding her husband's existence, but regarding her feeling for himself. He should believe that she had played with him, that she was but a heartless coquette. He should learn to despise, to abhor her. It was a desperate remedy, but she saw no other by which to repair the harm she had worked. Her new deed should be as the surgeon's knife, lacerating but to heal. And she would do this because she loved Harold; loved him so entirely that since she could not make him happy with her, she would make him

happy without her. Her conscience was not so delicate as to cause her many pangs on the score of her want of faith to Emily. Her regard for the young girl was after all of so shallow a nature that she could have seen her happiness sacrificed with only a passing regret. But for Harold's sake, she was glad that Emily existed; glad that when she should have wrung his soul and cast him from her, other arms would be opened to receive him. She could bear to see it done; she could bear anything for her love's sake. Sometimes, in the frankness of her self-communion, she asked herself why she should love Harold. She had known many more brilliant, more accomplished men than he, many greater and wiser. Did his attraction lie in his very difference from the rest? Was his charm for her merely the charm of youth and that of a fresh uncontaminated nature for a worldly sophisticated one? She could not answer her own questions. The subtle "something" inclining human hearts towards each other is ever a mystery. But for the first time in her life love had become to her more than a caprice, more even

than a passion. She could not wipe out her past. She could not make herself free and worthy of acceptance ; but she could and would offer, as a holocaust to the newly-learned feeling, her present and future happiness.

“ Yes,” said Helena to herself, while in another revulsion of feeling a bitter smile played about her mouth ; “ I must be a second Penelope ! What my own hand has wrought, that my own hand shall undo ! ”

CHAPTER IX.

A RUPTURE AND A RECONCILIATION.

HELENA'S resolution was not formed in a day. Many a sad hour, many a sleepless night was necessary for its conclusion; but once formed, it was irrevocable. Her manner towards her lover became colder. Often, when her heart most yearned towards him, she forced herself to assume an appearance of indifference. Harold, who felt grievously the alteration in her bearing, attributed it to her irritation at his own hesitation. He could not blame her if she desired to see them both freed from a position which was daily becoming more irksome. He determined to conquer his repugnance to a bare discussion of facts, to

talk freely and openly with Helena, to abide by whatever counsel she had to offer. She would be content when she found him ready to submit himself completely to her guidance. She was so kind, so tender, he thought, that she would forgive his sorrow at the grief he was about to cause the two friends who trusted him. Indeed, he was sure she shared his own regret, although she did not owe like him a debt of affection towards Emily and her mother.

With this disposition he sought an opportunity, one afternoon when the other ladies were invisible, to follow Helena to her apartment.

“Now it is coming,” she thought, with anguish. But her inward agitation did not betray itself in her manner. Outwardly she remained perfectly calm.

“I want to talk with you seriously, Helena,” Harold began, in a voice trembling with emotion. “I do not think the present state of things ought to go on much longer.”

“I quite agree with you. — Well?”

“I know you are dissatisfied with me and

you have a right to be. I know I am too weak, too faltering, too childish, if you will. But try to bear with me. I have thought it all out so many times — trying to persuade myself — sometimes I think I have succeeded — that everything which has happened is right and fair, on your side at least. You yielded, like myself, to a feeling too powerful to resist; you have nothing to reproach yourself with, — will have nothing when you are all my own. But I, Helena! I have broken faith with the sweetest, kindest child in the world; I have deceived her mother, who had intrusted to me her daughter's happiness. Do you wonder that my conscience smites me even in your arms?"

"Have I ever denied Emily's merits?" asked Helena, as he paused as if expecting a reply.

"No, no, never; and it is because you are so generous that I know you will forgive me for speaking to you openly about her. But that is not all, dear. You have been in the world much more than I. I know you do not feel about some things quite as I do. I can-

not help the thought that we — that is, that I ought to have waited to free myself from the obligations I incurred so long ago, never dreaming that you were one day to cross my path before I acknowledged my love to you and sought yours in return, — the thought, dear, that we have plucked the fruit before it was ripe, that we should have been willing to abide the season.”

“Do you think it would have been any sweeter, later?” asked Helena, the sarcastic tone of whose voice was strangely at variance with the tenderness which, in spite of herself, welled into her eyes.

“Sweeter? Oh! no,” sighed Harold, falling upon his knees before her. “Helena, Helena, do not tempt me now. Leave me my reason and the power to speak, so that you will understand. Just now, you see, I contradicted myself. Perhaps everything is right. You at least have done no wrong. I will believe it. You are good and great and noble. You shall tell me what to do. I am ready to break with Emily. I should have done so already if it had not been for her strange illness, for which

I cannot help holding myself partially responsible."

"You will get through life charmingly if you burden yourself with all the ills of other people," said Helena.

"Oh! But you understand, dearest. It was my uneasy conscience. I cannot help shuddering when I think how black the future will look to her. I am sure you pity her too."

"Yes," answered Helena with a peculiar intonation in her voice. "I understand and I pity her; but let me give you a piece of advice, Harold. Never again let one woman you love perceive the depth of your affection for another."

"I should never be all myself with any one but you," answered the young man. "Besides, such counsel is perfectly superfluous, for I never shall love any one but you. You are the world to me, you are all I ever dreamt or longed for. It almost seems to me that my life began when I saw you first, and that I exist through you."

He took her hands and kissed them.

Helena abandoned her hands to his clasp.

Surely, she might allow herself so much. It was for the last time.

Presently Harold raised his head again. "My heart is already lighter now that I have broached this dreaded subject," he said. "Let me confess the whole truth to you. There have been times when I have meant to leave you, but I know now that the tie to you is stronger than all others. I cannot leave you, my darling, I cannot live without you. I will place everything in your hands. You shall dictate and I will obey. How will you have me act?"

"Tell me first what you propose."

"I would speak with Emily, to-day, — to-morrow. She could bear it now; but it would be impossible for you to be here when the rupture comes. I must be sincere, and even if I were not she would know that only one cause could make me break faith with her. You feel kindly towards Emily and her mother, I believe, I know; but, of course, all relations between them and us must cease. Will you go away first and shall I join you as soon as I have parted from them? Or is it best to

wait a little longer? As soon as Emily is better, they will go north. They spoke of it only last night, you remember. I might accompany them to some place where they would be well cared for, and then return to you; or you might come to meet me wherever you prefer. In either case, we could be married at once. There is a United States minister in every capital, and the necessary formalities would require but little time. I think you will agree with me that under the circumstances everything should be done as quietly and privately as possible."

"This is the first time you have spoken to me of marriage," said Helena evasively.

"Perhaps in just these terms," replied her lover in a surprised tone; "and I have told you, Helena, after that night, there — on the terrace — when we both succumbed — when the barriers fell before me and all was delirium — when I awoke again, there was a moment when I meant to ask you to forgive me and to set me free. But I could not, — could not. Since then my ceaseless thought has been how to attain our future with the least agony to us

all. What future can there be for us but marriage? You feel this too. Why do you try me now when I confess to you every weakness and ask you for strength? Have you a wiser plan than any of mine to propose?"

There was a pause. Helena hesitated before striking the final blow.

"There is an obstacle to your matrimonial projects," she said at last slowly.

"An obstacle," repeated Harold. "I don't understand you. We love each other. I have already sacrificed truth and honor for your love," he continued sadly. "What obstacle can there be?"

"My husband."

"Your husband!" cried the young man, springing to his feet. "Good God! Helena, what do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say," she replied in a hard voice, from which every trace of tender emotion was vanished. M. Raimond is only taking a pleasure-trip for the moment, — to the South Sea Islands perhaps, or the sources of the Nile. I have not the pleasure of knowing his precise address; but, I assure you, he

exists and is quite capable of sending for me to come and share his solitude."

Harold stared at her with haggard eyes. He grasped the back of the chair for support.

"This is devilish," he gasped; "it is some awful dream. Speak to me, wake me, Helena; tell me it is not true."

To this agonized appeal there came no reply.

"Can it be possible?" he began again. "Has all this time that seemed so bright and fair been one long lie? Have you so utterly deceived me?"

"Did I ever tell you that my husband was dead?"

"Not in so many words: that is not necessary, but——"

"Then do not blame me," she interrupted, "if you allowed yourself to be misled by appearances."

Harold gazed at her with a horror and bewilderment too deep for speech. Yet the feeling that had ruled his breast could not die in an instant, even under the infliction of never so great an injury.

"But you loved me, Helena," he stammered,

“You love me still. Everything is over between us; but tell me that it was your love for me which led you into such a cruel deceit, and I will still forgive you. At least, let me be able to think of you with tenderness and regret.”

“Listen to me,” said Helena, her control of her intense inward anguish lending a strange harshness to her voice. “We may as well be perfectly frank with each other. I loved you as women like me love. We cannot live very long without some excitement;—here was one at hand. My heart was quite disengaged. It is only fair that you should know that—morally—I am perfectly free from Raimond; there was never any pretence of sentiment between us. The season, the climate, the very voluptuousness of nature,—everything here inclines the imagination towards love. You have been, for me, the recipient object.”

The words fell from her lips slowly, one by one, like drops of venom scathing her hearer’s soul.

“Then you have played with me all this time?” he asked hoarsely. “You have robbed

me of my peace, my integrity, my honor, for the sake of a mere caprice?"

"Why take it so tragically?" she returned. "You ought rather to be grateful to me. We have both been actors in a delicious idyl, which might have lasted still longer but for your hesitations and scruples. Do you suppose I have not seen them all? Do you think that was not enough to turn me from you? Yes, we must part; but the fault of this manner of parting lies with you."

Harold passed his hand two or three times wearily across his forehead, as if to dispel some evil dream.—Indeed, he had not thoroughly comprehended.

"Yes, we must part," he said; "but, surely, not so. Surely, you have some kind, some tender word for me, Helena!"

"I have said all I have to say."

"Is this your last word?"

"My last word."

Harold staggered rather than walked towards the door. But, before reaching the threshold, he turned once more. Even then he could not bring himself to believe her. Even then she

might have won back his forgiveness ; perhaps something of his regard.

“Do you *not* love me, Helena?” he asked despairingly.

There was a second's pause.

“No,” said Helena.

He reached the door, — it closed behind him.

Then a great cry rose up from the depths of Helena's soul, — “Harold !” But she stifled it on her lips. It did not reach his ear.

Helena rose, but her trembling limbs would not sustain her. She sank upon the ground, her golden head bowed low. The sword that had penetrated her lover's heart had pierced her own as well. With his departing figure there seemed to go from her the last ray of youth and hope and happiness.

That evening, Harold did not appear at dinner ; but Helena, sure of not meeting him and desirous at any cost to avoid exciting remark by her absence, took her place at the table as usual. All her power of dissimulation, however, could not entirely conceal the traces of recent emotion. Deep circles lay beneath her eyes, which were dim with weeping.

“I hope we aren’t going to have you ill, too, my dear,” said Mrs. Wyndham, regarding her with some apprehension. “You don’t look at all well, to-night.”

“Oh! don’t be frightened about me,” Helena answered; “there is never any danger for me. I do not remember having been ill once in my life. I am as ‘tough as a pine-knot,’ as we should say in Yankee-land.”

“Well, I can’t help it; you don’t look well.”

“It is this sirocco air; people who have lived in Italy a long time always feel it more than the new-comers. Besides, I received some unpleasant news this afternoon, which I have perhaps allowed to affect me too much.”

“Oh! I am very sorry. By the way, do you know where Harold is?”

“No, I have not seen him since just after lunch.”

“It is very wrong of him to go off and not come back to his meals. He has not been like himself ever since Emily’s illness. Of course, it is natural that he should feel anxious, particularly as he was not allowed to see her for so long. But, as I told him, he need not worry

himself into a fever too. I can't afford to have a whole family of invalids on my hands. But you young people are so strange. You will come and see Emily, — won't you?" she continued as they left the table.

"Not to-night; thank you. Give her my love, and tell her I have letters to write. I shall see her to-morrow morning. She will begin to come down to the table very soon, I hope."

"Yes, in a day or two. She dreads the stairs a little, and I don't like to force her. Good-night, then, if you won't come."

Emily and her mother remained longer than usual on their terrace that evening, awaiting Harold's arrival. It was late when they retired for the night; but still he had not returned. On the following morning a servant brought Emily a scrap of paper on which were hastily scrawled a few words, to the effect that Harold had gone in a fishing-boat to Amalfi. He wished to make some sketches there, he said, and might not return for several days.

"It is very foolish of him," said Mrs. Wyndham, to whom Emily handed the piece of paper.

“I believe he has set his heart on getting a sunstroke or something. You must hurry and get strong, Emily, — for I want to leave this place.”

“So do I,” replied her daughter, “though it seems ungrateful to say so.”

A few days later Emily was half reclining in her great chair, which had as usual been rolled out upon the terrace. The sirocco had ceased. A refreshing breeze, blowing from the sea, stirred the folds of her white dress, and fluttered the blue ribbons that tied the long braids of her hair. On an empty chair beside her lay the many-colored piece of worsted work belonging to her mother, who had stepped indoors to arrange her toilette for dinner. A book lay upon Emily's lap, but she was not reading. A paper-knife lay across the freshly-cut pages. The young girl's eyes wandered past the orange-groves to the hills, lying so soft, so tender, so misty, and yet distinct in outline, against the spotless, fathomless afternoon sky. Here and there a grape-vine, clambering up from the garden below, trailed itself across the scanty lattice-work of poles surmounting the terrace.

Opposite her chair stood a great pot of glowing scarlet geraniums. Now and then a bright green lizard ran swiftly along the stone wall by which the terrace was encircled. Once again, this afternoon, as frequently before, the beauty of the scene struck Emily as if she were beholding it for the first time. Once again, — as oh! how often! — she asked herself, “How could it be possible that anything had happened to mar this perfect poem?” She was so absorbed in contemplation that she did not notice a step coming softly along the corridor leading to her terrace. Suddenly she felt that some one was standing behind her. Two or three freshly-culled flowers fell into her lap.

“Oh!” cried the young girl; “Harold, is it you?”

“I have come back, Emily,” replied Harold in a grave, sad voice.

“Mamma,” said Emily half an hour later when the dinner-bell rang, “I feel so much better to-night I think I will go down-stairs.”

Harold could never have told afterwards how he lived through that first meal in Helena’s presence. He had a vague recollection of

making a feint to eat, of sending away plate after plate untouched, of devoting himself nervously to Emily, of inventing excuses to pacify her mother who was alarmed at his want of appetite. Through it was a dim consciousness of being helped now and then by some discreet speech or discreeter silence on Helena's part, and of being angry with himself for availing himself of her assistance.

But Helena, watching him unobserved with the swift penetration some women possess, saw how fatally well she had done her work. She saw that every spark of confidence in and esteem for her was gone ; that soon the last lingering embers of a love which sought to outlive the rest would, in their turn, be extinguished. She saw the bitterness of soul, the agonized throbs with which his heart still quivered. Her own responded, but she made no sign.

Yet, in spite of the gulf that had opened between them, Helena and Harold still found themselves, in a measure, accomplices. There was a tacit understanding that everything should be avoided which might excite the suspicions of the elder lady, who, naturally none

too clear-sighted and lately absorbed in the care of her daughter, had fortunately remained in ignorance of the drama enacting before her.

Helena still passed some portion of each day with Emily, at which times Harold invariably contrived to be absent from the house. During the hours which he devoted to the young girl, Helena was always otherwise engaged. Emily's delicate health afforded a pretext for some change in their way of life. The evening reunions were renounced. When circumstances or the preservation of appearances forced them into companionship, Harold sometimes forgot himself, betraying his embarrassment; Helena never lost her self-possession. Her manner towards the young man varied hardly a shade from her former one. This very self-control and apparent coolness recalled to him more and more persistently the horrible deception of which he had been the victim.

Everything Helena did or said seemed false to him. He longed to be beyond the sound of that voice which still had power to thrill him with the memory of what had been; — out of sight of that beguiling, baneful beauty. It

appeared to his excited fancy that Helena must corrupt everything with which she came in contact; that Emily herself would grow less sweet, less good, less innocent beneath her contaminating influence. While such was the state of affairs between the two persons so lately lovers, a regard for appearances, or the repugnance to an explanation, more than anything else, still held the two young women together. As we know, Emily had never ceased to admire Helena even in the midst of her suffering. Now she perceived that a change had come over the mutual relations of her friend and her lover, and her own heart beat with renewed hope. Yet it was natural that the warmth of her friendship should have abated somewhat. She no longer felt quite at ease in Helena's presence. She was anxious to leave her and Sorrento; to seek amid new scenes, relief from the painful sensations of the past weeks. Meanwhile, she was growing stronger every day. She had already been to drive two or three times, when, one afternoon, she expressed a wish to walk down to the sea.

“If Harold will come with me and give me his arm on the way back, I am sure I can accomplish the ascent nicely,” she said, in reply to her mother’s objections. “If I can do that, then I am fit for anything, and we can start on our journey to-morrow, if you like.”

“Your obstinacy shows me that you are quite well again,” said her mother, laughing. “Very well; try it, if you think best.”

“No, I want to go to the very end,” insisted Emily, as Harold proposed stopping midway down the path. They descended the steps, flight after flight, until they reached the water’s edge. There, crossing to the promontory, where they had spent so many mornings, Harold spread a shawl upon the rocks, and they seated themselves, looking towards the setting sun whose brilliancy was softened by a bank of clouds.

“How long it seems since we used to come here,” said Emily, after a time.

“Yes, I was thinking of that, too.”

“And how much has happened since then,” continued the young girl.

Harold looked at her keenly, as if to gather

the significance of her words. What did she mean? How much had she divined? The impulse to speak came upon him, to confide his sufferings and struggles to the gentle creature beside him, to seek from her forgiveness and repose.

“Emily,” he began, “I have a long and sad confession to make to you. Will you let me make it now?”

She raised her hand with a deprecatory gesture.

“Oh! Harold, do not tell me anything. I do not wish to know.”

“But you must know, child. We must be sincere with each other. I cannot live and know that there is a veil between us. I can never be happy at your side if I have not told you how I have sinned against you, and asked your pardon. If it were not now, it must be another time, — soon. May it be now, Emily?”

“As you wish,” returned the young girl, submissively. “Speak, dear Harold, if you must.”

And Harold spoke. With many a pause, with frequent hesitations for language in which

to clothe thoughts so chaotic in his own mind, he told of the swerving of his faith from her and of its faltering return. He made no attempt to exculpate himself with that old excuse: "The woman tempted me and I did eat," which renders the first man forever contemptible in the eyes of the opposite sex.

Helena's name was hardly mentioned. To judge from his representation, one would have considered him alone culpable.

"Can you forgive me, Emily?" he asked, when his story was told.

"I love you, Harold," she answered simply, and pity, pardon, comfort and support were united in those four words.

"But I hardly know myself," he went on. "It seems as if something were broken within me which never could be mended again: as if a chord had ceased to sound. All that is left in my heart is yours; but I have no longer what I once had to offer you. Can you take what is left, — the poor remnants, — and bear with me still?"

"I love you, Harold," the young girl repeated.

“Oh! you are good, you are generous,” cried Harold. “Heaven will give me strength again. You shall not repent of your noble part.”

Stooping, he pressed his lips to the hem of her white dress. But Emily drew back quickly.

“Don’t, don’t, Harold!” she exclaimed; “I am not so good as you think me. I knew, I imagined, something of this before. I heard what you said in Capri. — And Harold, I need not have fallen into the water if I had taken hold of the boat.”

“Good God! how awful!” cried Harold, horrified.

“Yes, it was very wicked. Suddenly it came over me that it would be much easier for me and every one if I were out of the way. I never thought of poor mamma, I never thought of your remorse. I was only very miserable, and I let myself go.”

“Good God!” ejaculated Harold again.

“Only very lately, since my strength has begun to come back,” continued Emily, “I have seen things as they are. At first, I wondered what I had done; but now, I know my

fault. I, too, have been to blame. I was so absorbed myself in Helena that I half forgot you, and I gave you no support. Can you forgive *me*, Harold?"

"You are the soul of generosity, Emily," Harold answered, "*I* have nothing to forgive. But that you could be led to such a horror shows me still more clearly the enormity of my offence against you."

"Hush!" whispered Emily, and, leaning towards him, she kissed him on the forehead.

At that moment there was formed between them a deeper, holier bond than the first had been. Each began to measure the demands of the future and to recognize wherein past failure lay. Harold resolved to repay with unflinching devotion Emily's constancy and long-suffering affection, and, above all, to keep himself worthy of her sweet and innocent companionship. Emily realized that with her it lay, not only to restore her lover's broken spirit by the gentle offices of tenderness, but to be the stimulating, appreciative friend; to follow him upon those paths to which his completer genius should lead him, while pre-

serving for him within the circle of her modest influence a place of peace and repose.

A humbler, sadder, but a wiser pair, — they would, when the time came, enter upon their common destiny, than if these sorrowful floods had never swept across their souls.

For, in the wise provision enabling human beings to derive some unexpected compensation from almost every vicissitude of life, how often does it not happen that from the bitterest fountains of experience flow waters of content !

CHAPTER X.

DEPARTURE.

Now the guide-books were produced. On Mrs. Wyndham's table lay a whole library of small red-covered volumes which she and her daughter consulted, and pored over with a persistency well known to all persons who have ever planned a journey to an unfamiliar spot. As soon as one route was studied out and all but chosen, another would suggest itself as perhaps preferable. Then they would be sure to forget the first, and the entire process would have to be gone over again. The "Baedekers" took, for a time, the place of all other literature. After all, there is a fascination about guide-books. One turns to them again

and again, till one knows their contents almost by heart: just as one reads and re-reads the placards and advertisements in a railway-station during a long period of waiting for a train; or as, confined to one's bed by illness, one traces the pattern of the wall-paper, making out its figures and designs, until every dot and line is engraven on the brain.

Once more Helena's experience was valuable to her friends. They had at first intended going to Switzerland, but Emily shrank from meeting many people. There awoke in her mind an old desire to see the Tyrol, inspired by the perusal of "Quits," which agreeable book has probably led many persons to visit the scenes among which its story is laid. Helena gave them much information about portions of the Tyrol and the Bavarian Highlands, with which she was familiar: telling them where they might find the combined advantages of fine air, quiet, and not too great remoteness from Munich, in which city the ladies wished to pass some weeks in the autumn, when Harold should have returned to Paris.

As the moment of departure drew near, a

feeling of unrest and excitement took possession of them all. With Mrs. Wyndham's feeling, in spite of her previous desire to leave Sorrento, a keen regret was mingled; and Emily, too, though anxious to be gone, felt a pang of sadness when the day decided upon for their journey dawned at last. We often take root more deeply than we know in the soil upon which even our temporary abode has been fixed; on leaving it we are astonished to find how closely the fibres of our being cling to the accustomed spot, with what difficulty they may be loosened. Besides, almost every one dreads, in some degree, the uncertainty of a future in which the old order of things is to be altered. However desirable a change may appear, the moment of its accomplishment is rarely entirely free from apprehension.

Helena watched and assisted her friends, in their preparation for their journey, with divided sentiments. Each day brought with it a greater strain upon her nerves, taxing, almost beyond endurance, her power of self-control and dissimulation. Yet, though her present position towards Harold was so painful

and revolting, there were times when it seemed to her that to see him, even while suffering from his scorn and reprobation, was better than not to see him at all. This parting would, of course, be final. Harold had no other wish than to find himself removed, as far as possible, from Helena and all she recalled to him. He waited with feverish impatience for the last hour of their intercourse to strike. Emily, who had always been accustomed to pack her own and her mother's trunks, was unfitted at present for such an arduous task. Helena set her maid to work upon the Wyndhams' luggage, superintending and suggesting herself in a way which much lessened the other ladies' responsibility.

“Well, I declare!” said Mrs. Wyndham, seating herself on the last trunk that was locked and corded, and glancing with a mournful air about the empty-looking room, “I would not have believed that I should feel so sorry to go away. It is surprising how attached one becomes to a place. As for you, my dear,” she continued, turning to Helena, “you have been a real providence. I don't know

what we should ever have done without you. Suppose I had had to nurse Emily through this sickness all by myself, with nobody near who understood this foreign talk. The idea quite makes me tremble, — even now that the danger is over. And you have made it seem like home here from the first moment. The *padrone* — is that what you call him? — ought to give you a medal. I have thought sometimes,” she went on after a pause, hesitating a little, “that Emily does not, somehow, seem quite the same since her illness: not always as mindful as she should be of your great kindness to her; but I hope, if it *is* so, you will excuse her. She is not quite well yet, and her head and Harold’s seem turned with the idea of this journey. A little while ago, they both thought there was no place like Sorrento, and now they behave as if they could not get away from it fast enough. I really don’t understand young people nowadays. But, I assure you, Emily is grateful to you in her heart. I wish you knew how many times she has said so.”

“Dear Mrs. Wyndham,” Helena replied,

“Emily has often thanked me a great deal too much for what has been a mutual advantage. I have enjoyed the society of you all quite as much as you say you have enjoyed mine, and I am more sorry to lose you now than you can be to go. — I was telling your mother, Emily,” she added as the young girl entered the room, “how grieved I am to part with you. We were recalling some of the pleasant hours we have passed together. You will not forget them either when we are separated, — will you?”

The color rushed into the young girl’s face at what she fancied to be an implied reproach.

“Oh! Helena,” she exclaimed, with more warmth than she had lately manifested towards her friend, “I shall never forget how you have helped and taught me, — all you have been to me. I shall always remember you and be grateful to you, though this is the end of all.”

“I don’t see why you should both talk as if you never expected to meet again,” said Mrs. Wyndham; “we are not going home for a long time. We may be in Italy again, and Mrs. Raimond will be sure to come to Paris. Or, if

not, you have an aunt in America, Mrs. Raymond: you go to see her sometimes, — don't you?"

"I have been once," answered Helena.

"Then you must come and make us a visit, too. Will you promise?"

"You are very good," replied Helena; "but everything seems so uncertain — and sometimes I feel so old, so old — that I dare not look forward to anything."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham. "A strong young woman like you! I wish you would not talk so lugubriously. It makes me feel worse than ever. There would be more sense in my going on in such a strain; but I am sure we shall meet again, and perhaps — who knows? — spend another long summer together as pleasant as this has been."

"Let us hope so," said Helena and Emily, hypocritically. They both knew that a cause of which the elder lady was ignorant would divide their paths forever.

The travellers were to leave by the Naples boat; and at three o'clock the carriage which was to convey them to the shore drove up to

the door. Helena was to accompany them. The host and hostess of the Cocumella, with their children and the corps of servants, were assembled to witness the departure. Some wraps and travelling-bags having been handed up to the driver, the party entered the carriage. As a last attention the *padrone* came forward with two enormous bouquets of flowers, which he presented to the ladies with a low bow and an appropriate speech. “*Addio, buon viaggio, a rivederci!*” he concluded. — Amid a chorus of good wishes and farewells and a great waving of hats and handkerchiefs, the carriage moved away. Its occupants were very silent. In a moment of terror at the fancied approach of another carriage in the narrow lane (the object coming towards them proved to be a laden mule, which was hurried down a side-path, out of their way), Mrs. Wyndham clutched Helena’s hand and did not let it go again. Harold, who, in the natural order of their entering the carriage, found himself opposite Helena, kept his gaze fastened on the walls between which they passed, that he might not encounter her eyes. Emily, divining

his discomfort, longed for the drive to be over. The desired moment soon arrived. Rattling across the pavement of the square, the carriage stopped at the steps descending to the beach. Some men were already carrying down the trunks. The hotel porter came up and touched his hat.

“The steamer is almost in, *signora*,” he said to Helena. “There is not much time to lose.”

Helena translated his words to Mrs. Wyndham. Harold felt a thrill of thankfulness that the adieux would be cut short.

They descended the long flight of steps leading to the low stone pier, beside which a row-boat was lying.

“Let the old lady go first. May I help you, *signora*?” said the porter.

Mrs. Wyndham turned to Helena and kissed her affectionately, holding both her hands.

“Good-by, my dear,” she said; “and once more, — a thousand, thousand thanks.”

The tears stood in her eyes as the porter on one side, and Harold on the other, assisted her to step into the boat.

In the meantime Helena put her arms around Emily's neck.

"Think of me kindly, Emily," she whispered in the young girl's ear; "I have been a better friend to you than you know."

A misgiving of some injustice on her part arose in Emily's mind. A wave of the old warm feeling swept over her. She clung to her friend in a long embrace.

Harold looked on impatiently. He could not bear that Helena's mouth should touch Emily's pure lips.

"It is time to go," he said sharply.

The young women separated. Helena stood aside while Emily entered the boat. Then, boldly, half defiantly, she offered her hand to Harold. He could not refuse to take it, with all eyes fixed upon him; but his own hand lay limp and cold in Helena's clasp.

"Good-by," she said softly, in a sad tone.

"Good-by," he answered coldly, leaping into the boat.

The boatman pushed off from the pier. The oars rose in the air and fell, flashing, into the water.

“Good-by, dear!” called Emily and her mother together.

“Good-by, good-by! Good luck to you, *buon viaggio!*” was the reply.

Harold was silent. As he took his place beside Emily, Helena saw him lean over the edge of the boat and plunge his fingers into the water, as if to wash away the contamination of her touch.

The boat moved quickly towards the steamer, which approached retarding its speed until it stopped in the midst of a number of small craft awaiting its arrival. Helena lost sight of her friends for a time as they waited, on the farther side of the vessel, for the newly-arrived persons to disembark. Then she saw them come up on deck, and two white signals fluttered in the air as the steamer started swiftly away on its course towards Naples. The returning row-boats came up to the pier and landed their passengers, who looked with curiosity at Helena. But she remained immovable until the figures of her friends became specks upon the deck, then vanished utterly, and nothing was to be seen but the black hulk

of the receding vessel and a long trail of smoke in the air.

It was over. They were gone beyond recall.

He for whom she had felt the purest love, to whom she had brought the greatest sacrifice of her, life had parted from her ignorant of her devotion, bearing away only scorn and horror of her memory.

“So it was to be,” she thought wearily, in the sort of fatalism to which she was inclined. “Who shall dare to say that the worst of life is past for him?”

The hotel seemed desolate and deserted when she entered it again. She went slowly upstairs, into that part of the house where her friends' apartments were situated. The windows and doors of Harold's room stood wide open. A servant was preparing it for the reception of some future guest. She felt as if she had come home from a funeral; but this parting was worse than death.

She turned away from Harold's door and went to her own room. On the floor, leaning against a chair, she saw a large square package. She opened it hastily and found, as she

had expected, her own unfinished portrait. It had not been touched since Emily's illness. She knew that no copy had been made of it. She knew that Harold had abandoned the design of the large picture he had desired so ardently to paint. She knew that he was unwilling to owe to her or even indirectly to associate her with any portion of his future reputation. She gazed long upon this semblance of herself; then, setting it down with a sigh, she went to open the blinds which had been partially closed to exclude the dazzling afternoon sun. She looked across the bay in the direction in which the steamer had disappeared. Now not even a film of smoke was visible. It was a glorious August afternoon. The blue mirror of the sea lay rippled, here and there into white caps, beneath a glowing sky. The foliage in the garden was of as deep an emerald hue as ever. On the vines that twined and clambered everywhere lay thick clusters of half-ripe grapes. But the heavens seemed as brass above her. Beauty had faded from the scene. For Nature — the great consoler, the harbinger of hope — may

bear a balm for many a sorrow, may soothe them who bow beneath the loss of friends and fortune, may with her eternal tranquillity lend repose to the soul in many a troubled hour, — but for the stings of hopeless love she brings no relief!

CHAPTER XI.

THE IRONY OF FATE.

MORE than a month elapsed before Helena received any news from her absent friends. She herself continued to remain at Sorrento because it was still too early in the season to return to Rome, and because she had neither energy nor will to seek any mental diversion elsewhere. She was weary and listless. Her pencils and brushes were piled upon her closed box of colors. The book she pretended to read often lay for hours on her lap open at the same page. She never sang. Only her piano still afforded her occupation. To that she frequently turned, conjuring up from the hidden possibilities of music a world of sad

harmonies in which was reflected the heaviness of her heart.

Josephine, who was much attached to her mistress, kept the rooms more carefully swept and garnished than ever, and the vases filled with flowers; but Helena took little notice of her maid's efforts to please her. She permitted herself to be attired in whatever Josephine laid before her. A dull indifference to everything had usurped the place of her ordinary vivacity. For almost the first time in her life, her courage had failed her; her natural buoyancy of temperament was gone.

It happened that for two or three days Josephine had returned empty-handed from the post-office, when, one morning, she appeared before her mistress with a large bundle of letters and newspapers just arrived in the early mail.

Helena tossed the envelopes impatiently aside, till she came to one directed in Emily's handwriting. Her cheek flushed as she hastily tore it open. Emily's letter was as follows:—

“GARMISCH, BAVARIA, Sept. —, 188—.

“My dear Helena, — I am afraid you have been very much surprised at not hearing

from me before now, and have thought me very neglectful. But neither indifference nor forgetfulness was the cause of my silence.

“ Now, I will tell you all about us. Mamma was very sea-sick while crossing to Naples and wished she had never left Sorrento, or at least that we had chosen the land route. We passed one night in Naples, as was intended; then, as mamma has a horror of Rome in summer, we stayed the second night at Albano, which we left early in the morning in order to take the through train north, from Rome.

“ It was very hot in Florence, and I did not bear the travelling so well as we had expected. When we reached Innsbruck I was all worn out again. I meant to have written to you there, but I was too tired to do much of anything, and as mamma never writes letters, I had to attend to her correspondence.

“ Harold left mamma and me to take care of ourselves for a time in Innsbruck while he went with some other young men on a short walking tour. I will not attempt to tell you where they went, the names of the places are so queer and hard. But they crossed a great glacier,

coming out at Meran, and went up the Passeir Valley, and saw the house where the Tyrolese patriot Andreas Hofer used to live, and the hut on the mountain where he hid and was taken prisoner by Napoleon's soldiers.

“As we came along the banks of the Adige I thought a great deal about Napoleon. The great soldier and his victorious legions seemed to defile before me. But I am forgetting of how little interest my impressions must be to you.

“For the last week or so we have almost lived in a carriage, making some of the excursions you planned for us. Now we are very pleasantly settled in Garmisch, and thank you for sending us here.

“The weather is perfect. Is there anything more delightful than September days, when a light haze rests on the landscape, when the air is cool and refreshing, and the sun at the same time so warm and cheering?

“I love, too, to watch the mountain streams. How they rush through the valleys, striking against the rocks and stones of their beds, the lines of foam whirling back again till it seems

as if half the stream were trying to flow backwards to its starting-place! It makes me think how we are always doing the same thing: fighting and struggling, trying to resist the current of destiny and death, — and it is all of no use. ‘The great river bears us to the main,’ where, according to your belief, there is nothing but silence. You see you have taught me to feel the symbolism of nature. How much you have taught me, Helena, and how grateful I ought to be — and am to you!

“We shall stay here about a fortnight and then go to Munich. We hope you will write to us at the ‘Four Seasons;’ or, if that is not convenient, after November, to Munroe’s care, in Paris. I have reached my ninth page, and I am sure you must be tired of having to read so much. Mamma is very well. She sends you a great deal of love, and hopes you will forgive my delay in writing. We thank you once more, most sincerely, for all you have done for us, and for your unvarying kindness. Good-by.

“Believe me very affectionately yours,

“EMILY.”

Helena came to the close of the sheet before her with a keen sense of disappointment. This was the letter which she had so longed to receive, — for which, day by day, she had watched and waited. Through all its pages a sense of constraint was visible, — a reserve quite unnatural to Emily. The young girl must certainly have learned to judge her friend more harshly now that she was removed from the spell of her presence. Andreas Hofer and Napoleon! What were they to Helena? What did she care for September days, or mountain streams? Yet there was a slight degree of comfort to be gleaned from Emily's meagre communication. At least, she knew where her friends were, and it was evident that Harold was well. What more could she demand? Did she expect him to send her affectionate, forgiving messages?

With a deep sigh, she laid down Emily's letter and took up the next one in the pile. It bore the stamp of a Parisian banking-house with which she and Raimond had had, at one time, extensive dealings. In it were two inclosures: one, a letter from the head of the

firm, a gentleman whose wife had formerly been one of her intimate acquaintances; the other, a worn, travel-stained envelope, completely covered with different addresses and post-marks.

She read the banker's note first: —

“Madame,” it began, “I write in person to offer you my excuses for an unwarrantable blunder committed in our house. The inclosed letter arrived in Paris more than a month ago. One of our clerks was ill. Another, a new hand, happened to light upon your old American address, and forwarded the letter to New York. It has just been returned to us. The young man who made the mistake has been severely reprimanded, but that does not mend matters. I am all the more distressed at the delay of this letter as I fancy it may contain an important communication. We heard of your exile in Sorrento from Mrs. De Vere. She has been to Norway and Sweden. Now she has passed through Paris, and carried my wife off to Nice. From Nice they are going to Monaco. They *say* because they prefer the view there! Oh! Madame, how wicked the world is! I hope Félice will not ruin me. I wish you were to

be with them. I assure you, Félice frequently raves, with astonishing disinterestedness, about *la belle Hélène*. Are we never to have the pleasure of beholding her among us again? Accept, madame, my profoundest apologies and my sincerest homage."

Helena tore the sheet through the middle with a feeling akin to disgust. She hesitated before opening the other envelope. She was certain that it contained news of Raimond. Perhaps the banker knew more than he had chosen to divulge. Perhaps Raimond was about to reappear, as she had always supposed he would. At last she broke the seal. The first page bore the date of the previous June, New Rush, South Africa. The writing was an unfamiliar one.

She began to read:—

"Madam HELENA C. RAIMOND.

"Madam,— It is my duty to inform you that your husband, M. Henri Raimond, who has for some months been working on a diamond 'claim' in this place, lately met with a severe accident. He had the misfortune to fall into

one of the pits, receiving serious injuries, both internal and external, from the effects of which he has just died.”

The paper dropped from Helena's hands. The room swam before her.

The letter went on to give the particulars of Raimond's accident, to acquaint his widow with the flourishing condition of his pecuniary affairs, and to request her to enter herself or to cause her lawyer to enter into communication with the writer, — who described himself as the physician who had attended Raimond, — and become the recipient of his last wishes and instructions.

But, for the present, Helena's mind could grasp only one fact. Raimond was dead — had been dead three months. She might have kept Harold for her own !

If there were any portions of her career which would not bear too close a scrutiny, any point at which error had become glaring, she was reaping her punishment now. Yet when she had somewhat recovered from the first shock of the blow, when the power of reason returned to her, there seemed a sort of grim

pleasantry about the turn events had taken. Nemesis seemed to stand before her with a mocking smile upon her countenance. "Yet was this justice?" Helena asked herself. Wherein had she been different from other people? She had only followed the path upon which circumstance and education had placed her. Was it her fault that she had become what she was? Did no blame attach to those who had gone before her? Where did her personal accountability begin or end? With these unanswerable questions mingled a doubt which in her hours of reflection since Harold's departure had often assailed her. Being what she was, could she have made him happy? Could she long have breathed the pure atmosphere which was life to him? Must she not have dragged him down into her own close and heated air? In striving to save herself, — might she not have wrecked him? And she was a dozen years his senior! She would be almost an old woman when he had hardly crossed the threshold of mature manhood. If he had ceased to love her devotedly and, above all, to respect her, would she not, in spite of

her intellect and accomplishments, have become an obstacle in his way? a hindrance rather than a help?

“Is it then better as it is?” cried Helena aloud. “At least,” she continued, in a sort of desperation, “there will be one fair page in my story. I shall have proved what the power of a true love can do. Once, by its might, I have risen above the waves of self. It is not my fault if I have had to throw away the hand that raised me, — if I must sink again. Now let the tide bear me where it will.”

Josephine hastened to answer a violent summons of her mistress’s bell.

“I wish you would begin to pack immediately, Josephine,” said Helena; “I shall start to-morrow for Monaco, to join Mrs. De Vere.”

“I am glad of it,” said Josephine to herself as she went to execute her mistress’s orders.

* * * * *

In the following January there appeared, among the list of marriages in the Boston papers, this notice: —

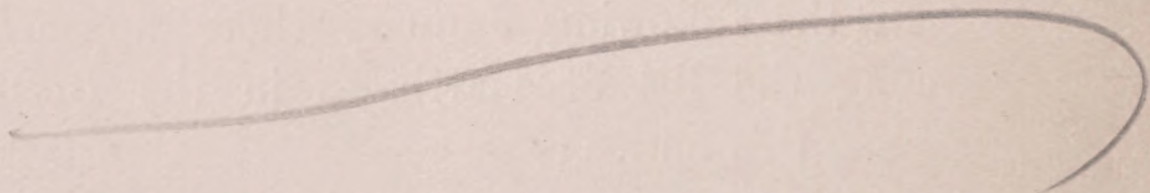
“In Paris, France, at the American Embassy, Harold Hart of New York, to Emily,

daughter of the late Thomas Wyndham of this city."

In the course of the year succeeding their marriage, the young couple returned to America. At about the same time, Helena was induced by some of her influential friends to take up her residence in Paris, "if only for a time." Sometimes there, sometimes in the Italian capital, sometimes at fashionable European resorts, she continues to pursue a brilliant, but a sad and reckless career.

THE END.

Ed. Rubbish



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